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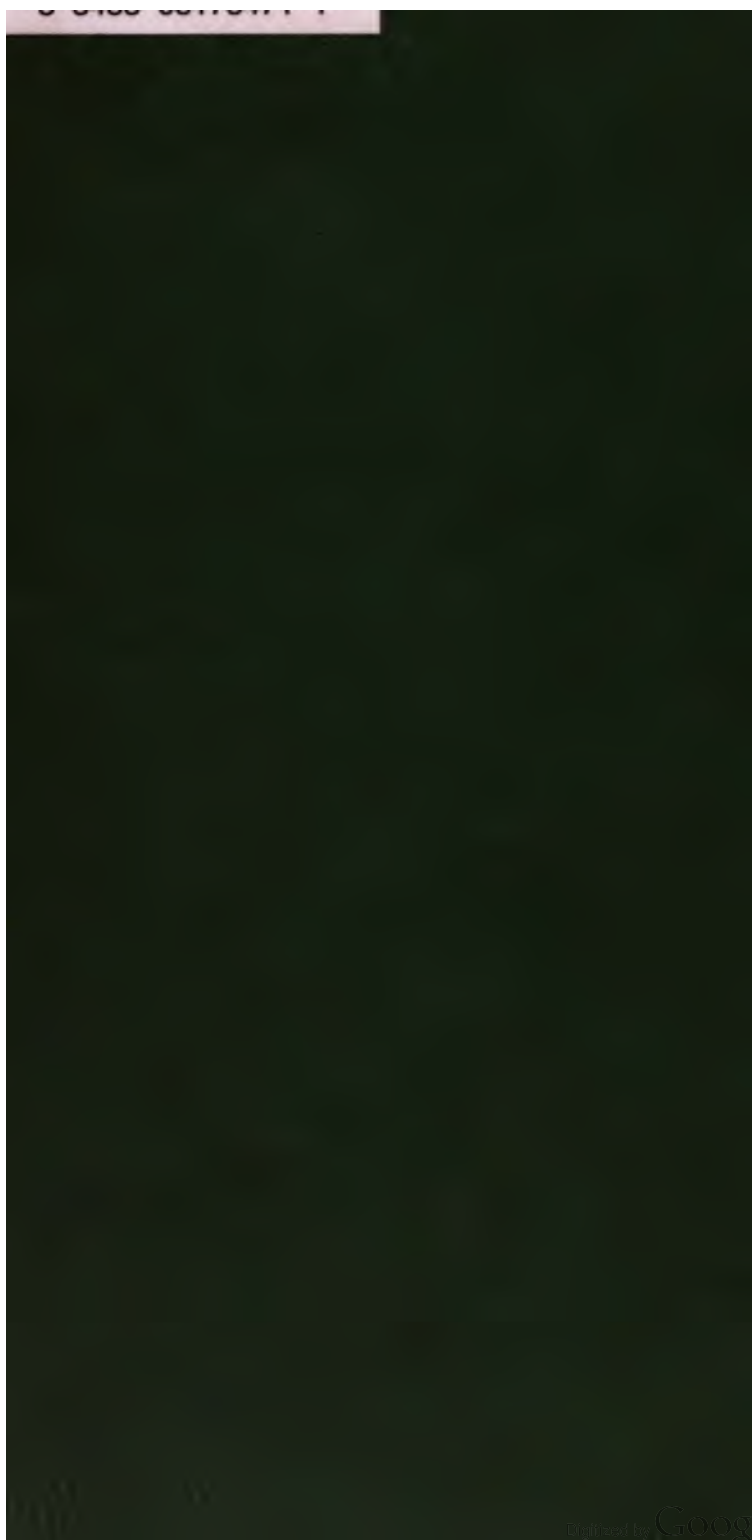
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THE REPUBLIC;
OR,
A HISTORY
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
IN
THE ADMINISTRATIONS,

**FROM THE MONARCHIC COLONIAL DAYS
TO THE PRESENT TIMES.**

BY
JOHN ROBERT IRELAN, M. D.

IN EIGHTEEN VOLUMES.

Volume X.

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HISTORY
OF THE
LIFE, ADMINISTRATION,
AND TIMES
OF
JOHN TYLER,

Tenth President of the United States.

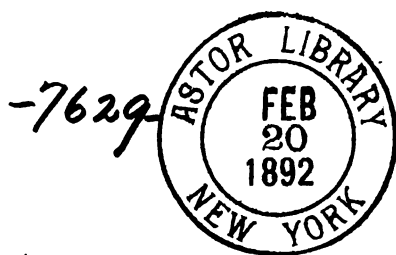
The Annexation of Texas,
AND
New Era of Territorial Extension.

BY
JOHN ROBERT IRELAN, M. D.

CHICAGO:
FAIRBANKS AND PALMER PUBLISHING CO.
1888.

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE.

THE TYLERS OF VIRGINIA	9
----------------------------------	---

CHAPTER II.

JOHN TYLER—HIS EDUCATION AND PROFESSION—BEGINS HIS POLITICAL CAREER—IN CONGRESS—A VIEW OF THE ERRORS OF THE PAST	20
--	----

CHAPTER III.

CONGRESSIONAL SERVICES—MR. TYLER'S EARLY VIEWS OF INSTRUCTIONS—AS GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA	33
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

MR. TYLER IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES—HE MAKES A RECORD	52
---	----

CHAPTER V.

MR. TYLER'S POLITICAL STANDING—HIS APPEARANCE IN THE RACE OF 1836—NOMINATED FOR THE VICE- PRESIDENCY IN 1839	73
--	----

CHAPTER VI.

"TIPPECANOE AND TYLER, TOO"—THE LOG-CABIN CAM- PAIGN—THE ELECTION—DEATH IN THE WHITE HOUSE—MR. TYLER BECOMES PRESIDENT	87
--	----

(5)

CHAPTER VII.

	PAGE.
WHAT WAS HE TO BE CALLED?—MR. TYLER DECIDES AN IMPORTANT QUESTION—CONGRESS IN SESSION—SPE- CIAL MESSAGE	112

CHAPTER VIII.

CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE—THE CONTEST BETWEEN MR. TYLER AND THE WHIGS—THE BANK VETOES .	142
---	-----

CHAPTER IX.

WHO STARTED THE FIGHT?—WHERE WAS THE FAULT?— PRESIDENT TYLER AND THE WHIGS—A KITCHEN CABINET	160
--	-----

CHAPTER X.

THE NEW CABINET—DISAPPOINTMENT ALL AROUND— WHIG MEASURES SUCCESSFUL—FIRST ANNUAL MES- SAGE	178
--	-----

CHAPTER XI.

THE PRESIDENT AND HIS FRIENDS—THE TARIFF VETO— MR. TYLER'S PROTEST—HENRY CLAY—THE DORR REBELLION—THE SEMINOLE WAR ENDED	208
---	-----

CHAPTER XII.

SECOND ANNUAL MESSAGE—TREATY OF WASHINGTON— MR. TYLER'S EXCHEQUER	232
--	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

JOHN C. FREMONT MAKES HIS FIRST EXPEDITION TO OREGON—PRESIDENT TYLER AND THE CABINET—THE PRINCETON—CHINA AND MR. CUSHING—THIRD AN- NUAL MESSAGE—THE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH—TEXAS AND 54° 40'	262
--	-----

CONTENTS.

7

CHAPTER XIV.

	PAGE.
TEXAS AND PRESIDENT TYLER—THE GREAT SCHEME OF THE ADMINISTRATION—THE RALLYING CRY OF 1844— HOW MR. CALHOUN GOT INTO THE CABINET . . .	296

CHAPTER XV.

TYLER AND TEXAS—THE GREAT THEME AT THE WHITE HOUSE—TEXAS OR SECESSION—PRESIDENTIAL CON- VENTIONS	312
--	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

THE RACE—MR. TYLER WITHDRAWS—"THE GLOBE"— THE POLK-CALHOUN-TYLER INTRIGUE—MR. BLAIR'S DREAM	323
---	-----

CHAPTER XVII.

CONGRESS IN SESSION—MR. TYLER'S LAST ANNUAL MES- SAGE	342
--	-----

CHAPTER XVIII.

TEXAS AND OREGON—WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WAR WITH MEXICO?—END OF MR. TYLER'S ADMIN- ISTRATION	369
---	-----

CHAPTER XIX.

LEAVING THE WHITE HOUSE—AFTER THE PRESIDENCY— THE PEACE CONFERENCE—THE CONFEDERACY—THE GRAVE	385
--	-----

CHAPTER XX.

AFTER THE PRESIDENCY—A FRIEND'S SKETCH—IN HOL- LYWOOD WITHOUT A MONUMENT	402
---	-----

CHAPTER XXI.

PAGE.

THE MAN AND HIS PUBLIC SERVICES—MR. TYLER AND THE WHIGS—MR. TYLER AND THE DEMOCRATS— THE STATE-RIGHTS POLITICIAN—WAS HE A STATES- MAN?	416
---	-----

CHAPTER XXII.

HOME OF THE TYLERS—THE TYLERS IN THE WHITE HOUSE—DEATH OF THE MISTRESS—A NOBLE CHAR- ACTER	438
--	-----

CHAPTER XXIII.

HOME OF THE TYLERS—THE WHITE HOUSE—ITS CHARM- ING MISTRESS—A MODEL FAMILY	450
--	-----

CHAPTER XXIV.

JULIA GARDINER TYLER—A NEW QUEEN AT THE COURT	463
---	-----

CHAPTER XXV.

A YEAR AT THE WHITE HOUSE—SCENES AT "SHERWOOD FOREST"—THE MISTRESS	470
---	-----

LIFE, ADMINISTRATION, AND TIMES

OF

JOHN TYLER,

TENTH VICE-PRESIDENT AND TENTH PRESIDENT OF
THE UNITED STATES.

April 4 (or 6), 1841, to March 4, 1845.

CHAPTER I.

THE TYLERS, OF VIRGINIA.

REPUBLICS tolerate no nominal nobility, nor do they in principle recognize any form of nobility, except such as may be traced to the character and deeds of their citizens. Were it in any degree worthy of an admirable and well-balanced mind to make a display of blood or family, or even of good qualities and deeds, the Tylers, of Virginia, would have quite as good grounds for such a performance as most of the distinguished families in a State as noted for its aristocratic tendencies as for the great number of really valuable men it has furnished the country. Having little sympathy with the spirit and practice of genealogy hunting, I shall not, however, depart so far from the ordinary way in this matter as to lose sight of the attainable facts

in family history which would in any way affect the life and character in hand.

Originally the Tylers were Welsh, or Norman-Welsh; but the progenitor of the Virginia line or branch came directly from Shropshire, England, where some of the same stock are at this day people of note. So early as 1654 Henry Tyler was found established in Virginia, between Yorktown and Jamestown, in what was known as the "Middle Plantations," his estate embracing the site of Williamsburg, the old colonial capital. He is said to have been "a cavalier and a gentleman." He died in 1672, leaving three sons, Henry, John, and Daniel. This son, Henry, figured somewhat conspicuously in the affairs of the Colony, and lived until 1729. By a first marriage this Henry left three sons, John, Francis, and Henry. John, the oldest of these sons, died before his father, but left five children, the oldest of whom was John. This John was marshal of the court of vice-admiralty for the Colony by appointment of the crown. He married Anne Contesse, a daughter of Dr. Louis Contesse, a Huguenot physician of Williamsburg, and left a family of five daughters and two sons. John, the second son of John Tyler and Anne Contesse, became the first really distinguished member of this old family; distinguished for his own qualities and public consequence as well as by being the father of a President of the United States. He was born in James City County, Virginia, February 28, 1747. His education was obtained mainly in the old college

of William and Mary, where he first met and became warmly attached to Thomas Jefferson. Although a few years younger than Jefferson, he was well up with him in the variety of his attainments, and strongly shared with him the early sentiments of aversion towards England. He studied law with Robert Carter Nicholas, and began the practice of his profession in Charles City County. He gained some distinction as a lawyer and politician, and figured prominently in the affairs of the Colony and State. In the spring of 1775, when the royal governor was about removing the powder from the magazine at Williamsburg, Mr. Tyler marched at the head of a company, gathered on short notice in Charles City County, to aid in resisting the outrage. He was subsequently elected captain of the militia company of the county. But his aspirations were not in a military direction, and in 1776 he was appointed a judge of admiralty to determine upon cases of the property of British subjects coming under the ordinance of confiscation. After serving for a time in this capacity, Mr. Tyler was elected to represent his county in the Legislature, and took his seat in that body in the spring of 1778. For eight or ten years he was continued in that position, serving as Speaker from 1781 to 1786. He also served for a time as a member of the Governor's Council. From 1786 to 1788 he served on the Supreme Bench of the State; was judge of the General Court from 1788 to 1808; was then three years Governor of Virginia; and was subsequently

Judge of the United States District Court for Virginia, a position he filled at the time of his death, on the 6th of January, 1813.

During the Revolutionary War he was an earnest supporter of the cause of the Colonies; and was subsequently instrumental in the call of the convention at Annapolis, resulting in the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia. He was, however, an opponent of the Constitution, and therefore stood with the Anti-Federalists. He was an able and worthy man, and, although an admirer of Mr. Jefferson, he was not his imitator. His fine education, first-rate abilities, and companionable qualities were pleasing to Jefferson, and for these things he was sought as a friend by his early radical and more distinguished republican associate. Mr. Jefferson had few friends who were not mentally up to his own mark, notwithstanding his real or apparent democratic socialism. In fact his democracy was mainly confined to his political theories. The intellectual world he reserved for the control of other laws. Judge Tyler was really one of the most able and spirited of the early governors of the State, and stood deservedly high in a race all "knights and fair ladies."

In 1776 Judge Tyler was married to Mary Marot Armistead, a young girl of sixteen, of German origin, but belonging to an old, long-Americanized, distinguished Virginia family. Their children were Anne Contesse, Elizabeth Armistead, Martha Jefferson, Maria Henry, Wat Henry, John, William, and

Christiana Booth. The mother of this extensive family died in her thirty-sixth year, in 1798, and Judge Tyler was never married again. He was a verse-writer of some real merit; and as he had sung the young girl's praises before their marriage, he mourned her loss in verse, and was deeply and singly devoted to the memory of his young wife.

It has been claimed for him that he stood in the lead in the House of Delegates in the steps providing for the Annapolis Convention in 1786, and strongly favored giving the Congress control over commercial regulations for the Confederacy of the United States as it was then. It must also be put to the credit of Judge Tyler that he was one of the earnest early emancipationists of Virginia, voted in favor of emancipation in the State, and was opposed to the clause in the Constitution of the new government giving the slave-trade a lease of years. Unlike his distinguished son, he was not unfriendly to dueling, was not averse himself even to resorting to the code in an emergency. The following is one of his letters to his son John, then a student at William and Mary, on the subject of expatriation, in which he takes occasion to berate John soundly on account of his carelessness:—

“GREENWAY, February 7, 1807.

“MY SON,—I received your last letter wherein you require my opinion on the right of expatriation. But first of all I can't help telling you how much I am mortified to find no improvement in your handwriting. Neither do you direct your lines straight, which makes your letters

look too abominable. It is an easy thing to correct this fault, and unless you do so how can you be fit for law business of every description? Look at the handwriting of Mr. Jefferson, Wythe, Pendleton, Mercer, Nicholas, and all the old lawyers, and you will find how much care they took to write handsomely. Writing and ciphering well are absolutely necessary, and can not be dispensed with.

“By expatriation we mean the going out of one’s country, giving up the rights of a citizen derived from its laws and constitution, and seeking our happiness wheresoever it may be attained on the globe. This principle is laid down in our bill of rights, and was in contradiction of the common law of England, which denies the privilege of giving up allegiance due to the King, who is no more than a servant of the people, and is placed in the executive branch for their well-being and happiness, as our Governor or President is, no matter by what name or title they be designated. But, notwithstanding this great privilege sanctioned by the first article in the bill of rights as well as the laws of nature, which gives to every man the right of locomotion, yet when he enters into society he certainly yields a portion of his rights into the common stock for the protection of the balance, which all the members of the community are bound to protect and secure. Now, although it may be admitted that a man has the general right, it is subject to some exceptions. Suppose the State was invaded by an enemy or greatly threatened; or suppose a Cataline within the bowels of the State raising an insurrection for the subversion of liberty and law; would any good man, who loved his country, think he could stand excused in the eyes of God and man for flying in time of danger, after being long protected in the enjoyment of life, liberty, and property, thereby absolving himself from that reciprocal duty and service which he owed to society for those enjoyments? What are the principles

in social compact which bind a people up together? Allegiance and protection. So far, then, is a citizen bound as long as he is one; but what is it better than desertion, if at the very moment his service is wanted, he should fly from his country's standard? Is not gratitude obligatory upon every human being? Is it not, next to our love of country, the most sublime virtue? If so, must not every citizen discharge that duty? Then how can he expatriate himself at the very moment he is called on to defend the State, and thereby discharge the most sacred trust? Surely no man will contend for such a principle so injurious and destructive to the interests of society? In the very moment of necessity every cowardly man individually withdraws, and leaves those of a different opinion to the total overthrow of a despot. I fix the right of the community to this point, to wit: that the moment a citizen is called on for his support there is an *obligation* upon him, and he is bound to yield to the call of his country. Look at a note in the American edition of Rousseau. The late Chief Justice of the Federal Court went as far as to insist on the common law principle in its fullest extent, whereby he erred in a twofold sense: first, because he assumed common law jurisdiction; and, secondly, he denied the right of expatriation, although expressly given by our State act of Assembly, but which act does not contravene the positions I lay down. When, therefore, a man expatriates himself, it must be before an immediate call or obligation is fixed on him, or he could not stand fair in the eyes of morality, reason, justice, or gratitude. But suppose an unnecessary or unjust war is proposed, the answer is clear,—a citizen can not be forced out of his country for such a purpose; and if he crosses the line, all jurisdiction ceases over him, unless he has enlisted for aggression. I write this hastily and in pain; so perhaps it is not clearly expressed, yet I think the principles are irrefragable.

“Your affectionate father, JOHN TYLER.”

The following letter from the pen of President Tyler, and taken from "The Letters and Times of the Tylers," may serve to close this brief chapter on the origin and early conditions of this old Virginia family:—

JOHN TYLER TO REV. WILLIAM TYLER.

"SHERWOOD FOREST, November 1, 1856.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Your acceptable letter of the 11th October reached me in due course of mail, and I regret I can make no suitable return for the information with which you have furnished me relative to the origin of our name and race. I say *our race*, because I do not doubt that all who bear the name of Tyler have a common origin. I think it probable that the first of the name who settled in England was of Norman origin, and accompanied the Conqueror in his invasion, and may have assisted him to overthrow the Saxon power, which went down with the banner of Harold and with Harold himself. If he did so, it was a scurvy trick in him; and I, one of his remote descendants, feel no great veneration for his memory on that account. Be that as it may, it is certain that the family have obeyed the great command to be fruitful, since their numbers in Great Britain and the United States are quite great, and are still upon the increase. To all the genealogy, other than that of my American ancestors, I have rarely given a thought, since it seemed to me to be a Cretan labyrinth, which would lead to endless confusion and perplexity. On the page of history I found one name of the family high enrolled. He was a blacksmith, and lived at a time when royalty and its satellites trampled upon the necks of the commons, and ground the people into dust. He, with others of his fellow-subjects, long submitted to the inflictions of tyranny in silence; but the last drop of patience was in the cup. That was exhausted when Richard the Second imposed a

poll-tax (the most unjust and unequal that can be imposed, since it operates *per capita* and without regard to property), in the collection of which the infamous tax-gatherer dared to offer a revolting insult to his youthful daughter. With his sledge-hammer he laid the insulting minion of power dead at his feet, and summoned the commons to the task of vindicating their rights. And glorious was that vindication! The satraps of the king were overthrown in battle, and the king was compelled to sue in person to the blacksmith for terms. Faithful to the trust reposed in him by the commons, he boldly, in an interview asked for by the king, proclaimed the public wrongs and demanded redress. He confided in the honor of a king, and went unattended to the interview, and was perfidiously slain. But 'the blood of the martyr was the seed of the Church,' and so was it here. That dastard king was constrained to reiterate the principles of *Magna Charta*, and to proclaim the doctrines of the Bill of Rights; and Wat *le* Tyler takes his position on the historic page alongside of the great benefactors of the Anglo-Saxon race. This man I have been content to recognize as the head of my immediate family; and have therefore looked upon most that the royalist writers have said of him as properly a part of their vocation, which is to defame the plebeian, and to do worship to monarch and aristocrat. O no, my dear sir, I can not surrender an origin so glorious to the accomplished king-lover Hume, or to him of Sudbury. The error of Dickens, an error into which others have fallen, consists in the substitution of an *a* for *le*, viz.: Wat *a* tiler for Wat *le* Tyler, as the same stood in 1311, in the case of Thomas *le* Tyler.

"The name has undergone changes in common with most other names. William the Conqueror parceled out the lands among his retainers, and in most instances each called the estate after his own name, or, what is more probable still, each lot of land was denominated after the

grantee, as the lot or land of Tyler, etc. In 1202 it was Gilbert *de* Tiller. In 1233, thirty-one years after, it was Gilbert *de* Tyler, viz.: Gilbert, the owner of the Tyler lot of land; and most probably at some time during the prevalence of the *de* the blazon of arms by Burke finds its origin. When, however, the members of the family became numerous, the *de*, which indicated the place of residence, was given up by the descendants of those who were sent out from the household, and the *le*, as merely indicative of relationship between the landholder and his collaterals, or their descendants, near or remote, was adopted in its place; and so when, by reason of the mist of ages, the tracing of pedigrees came to be difficult, and a reference to the head of the family, or more properly, the tenant-in-tail-male, who was in possession of the land, no longer indicated anything definitely, the *le* came to be dropped, and the name was written as we write it now; and the same thing has been the case with most English names.

"Thus it is that we have an explanation of all the errors of those who have written upon the subject, and have so unnecessarily converted a blacksmith into a tiler of houses, or the maker of tiles, and originated a patronymic whose beginning goes back to the days of the Conquest. Why, my dear sir, the name of Tyler must have abounded in England in the time of Richard II; and if Mr. Wat Hilliard, a name unknown in such connection, or anybody else, had assumed the name to cover rebellion, depend upon it that he of (de) Sudbury would not have been the only one to find it out, if the Tylers in England are what they are in America. Strange, too, that a name should have been adopted as a name of ridicule which designated an ancient and numerous family in England, among whom are knights-banneret, admirals in the navy, members of Parliament, and distinguished divines. I hold on, therefore, to Wat *le* Tyler, the blacksmith who

knocked out the brains of the miserable tax-gatherer for an insult to his young daughter, and who aided, even in death, to establish and confirm the rights of the commons. . . .

"I am, dear sir, truly and faithfully yours,

"JOHN TYLER."

CHAPTER II.

JOHN TYLER—HIS EDUCATION AND PROFESSION—BEGINS
HIS POLITICAL CAREER—IN CONGRESS—A VIEW
OF THE ERRORS OF THE PAST.

JOHN TYLER, JR., son of Judge John Tyler and Mary Armistead, was born in Charles City County, Virginia, on the estate called "Greenway," March 29, 1790. He did not, perhaps, early exhibit more than ordinarily attractive qualities; at all events, there is little to be told of him as a mere boy. He attended near his father's house at one of the "Old Field" schools, so-called in the South from the place where the school-house was located, and although a slender, mild-mannered boy, he enjoyed the common distinction of joining in assaults upon the teacher. The only apology that could ever, perhaps, arise for such a practice was to be found in the character of the men who were mainly the instructors of American youth at that day. Chiefly English clergymen and other wanderers to this continent were they, who were filled with old Greek and Latin fables, but really knew little of the millions of objects of interest filling the world and constituting its most prolific and beneficial sources of human knowledge. Many of these men, so-called teachers, were peripatetic

Irishmen and Scotchmen who had stern, unyielding ideas of discipline, and narrow ones of mental and moral manliness and expansion. Some of them were indeed exceedingly worthy men, certainly not behind the slow educational age in which they lived; but perhaps the majority of them were persons of ungovernable tempers, no great degree of refinement and culture, and by far from always exemplary in habits. This early race of American teachers has been greatly overestimated, a fact which nowhere better appears than in biography where the prevailing tendency has been to make something out of nothing. What distinguished man is there in the history of this country who did not in his boyhood have at least one of these extraordinary and unique teachers, sages who embraced in their vast learning and peculiar composition the very requisites for producing great pupils? The teachers of the year 1800 in the aristocratic "Old Field" schools of the South would in the main make a very poor showing by the side of the skilled professionals in the academies and public schools of 1885. Still the methods and the quality of the teaching and learning which characterized the "Old Field" school are yet to be found unfortunately, as well as the spiritless and comparatively worthless private family systems, here and there in vogue from Maine to Florida.

John Tyler was a bright boy, and whatever had been the character of the teaching and the fun, he was actually considered able to enter the grammar-school department of William and Mary College at the

age of twelve. In this old institution he remained several years, but even at the period of his graduation in 1807, according to the view of his father, he was not clear of abominable and unscholarly faults.

Mr. Tyler now began the study of the law under the direction of his father. He also received some help in his legal studies from his cousin, Samuel Tyler, and perhaps from Edmund Randolph, the first Attorney-General of the United States. At the close of his nineteenth year he was admitted to practice in his native county. His progress had certainly been very flattering, and his professional success from the outset was also exceptional. He courted popularity, and was not long in waiting for political preferment. In December, 1811, when he had barely reached the age of twenty-one, Mr. Tyler entered upon his wonderfully fortunate public career, as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates. To this position he was continually re-elected for five years. Unlike Mr. Jefferson and many other distinguished men who never became good speakers, and Mr. Madison and a vast number of others with whom speech-making was a slowly and often hardly acquired faculty, Tyler was at the outset and always a ready public speaker. He belonged, indeed, to that class of men commonly called orators; that is, "the most beautiful flowers of rhetoric, and the finest classic allusions made his speeches monuments of fancy and taste." Whatever opinion may be entertained as to the wisdom and propriety of such monuments of speech, it would be far out of the way to suppose that John Tyler's

speeches were all matters of fancy or flowers of rhetoric, even in his first political canvasses. He was, in fact, always a speaker of solid merit. His manners among men were very pleasing, and it has been mentioned among his virtues that nobody understood the "art of popularity" better than he did. However low or high this "virtue" may be ranked, and whatever forms of insincerity and trifling the candidate for popular favor may be driven to practice, it is certain that few have gained political eminence without popularity, in some degree according to the common sense of the term. It was never in the nature of Mr. Tyler to hold a public place inactively, and during his first term in the Legislature he made a record to some extent which served him well in after life, or at least became a matter of reference in relation to subsequent acts on a more important stage. A case in point was this. The Virginia Senators in Congress had been instructed by the Legislature to oppose and vote against rechartering the Bank of the United States. It was now found that the Senators were disposed to set aside the instructions. This brought Mr. Tyler forward with a resolution of censure, which was adopted in the Legislature; and in defending his action he maintained that a national bank was contrary to the Constitution, that Legislatures had the right to direct their Senators in Congress, and that it was the duty of Senators to obey such instruction whatever it might be. From these principles, it is claimed, he never departed throughout his career. Whether he himself

ever gave any grounds for suspecting that he would in an emergency favor a different policy as to a banking system, the reader will be able to decide better, perhaps, at a more advanced point in this history.

During his service in the Legislature at this time the second war with Great Britain occurred. Tyler was not only a warm advocate of the war, but when the British appeared in the Chesapeake he raised a company of riflemen, and, although it was not called into the field, from this fact he acquired the title of captain, and during his Presidency it was the fashion of some of his opponents to call him "Captain Tyler." During the session of the Legislature in the winter of 1815, by a flattering vote in both houses, Mr. Tyler was elected a member of the Executive Council of the State. This course of advancement had been taken by many of the young politicians who had then risen to national distinction in Virginia. Here he did not stop long. A vacancy occurring by the death of a Representative in Congress from the Richmond District, to this Mr. Tyler was elected by a small majority. His opponent (but of the same party) Andrew Stevenson, was one of the most favorably known and popular Democratic politicians in Virginia.

In December Mr. Tyler, for the first time, took his seat in the Congress of the United States. It should, perhaps, be considered that in a State like Virginia, where family relationship took so prominent a part in public affairs, the great success of

Mr. Tyler was owing, in a measure, to that fact. The name of his father was still potent in his interests; and then, too, in 1813 he had married Letitia Christian, a member of a very influential family of New Kent County. Robert Christian, the father of Letitia, was a leading Federalist, and there is nothing to show that he did not turn his influence to the benefit of his son-in-law. The age of "good-will" was at hand, and the Federal party was losing its organization. The peculiar Henry A. Wise says that Mr. Tyler's marriage to this lovely woman "made him blessed of Heaven, happy in his home, and strong in the favor of men of both political parties." With these things on his side, how could success fail to crown his efforts? However much family, or even the smiles of Heaven, may have done for Mr. Tyler in Virginia, and however much a happy home tempered him to harmony with the world, it is doubtful whether all these influences could have carried him, although they did follow him, to the wider national theater. There, to a great extent, he was stripped of his Virginia backings, and stood out for what he was worth in the conflict. He had been elected for several years to the Legislature, and now resigned his position in the State Council to take his place in Congress on the 17th of December, 1816. One of his eulogistic biographers thus speaks of his last step:—

"Mr. Tyler continued to act in the capacity of member of the Executive Council until November of the latter year, when, by the death of the Hon. John Clopton, a

vacancy occurred in the representation in Congress from the Richmond District. Two candidates were presented ; Mr. Stevenson, late Minister to England, and then Speaker of the House of Delegates, and Mr. Tyler. The contest was severe, and enlisted, to a great extent, the public feeling, though it produced no cessation of the friendly relations which had always existed between the two opposing candidates. Mr. Stevenson was a most popular man in Richmond, his place of residence ; but Mr. Tyler's popularity was not less great in his own and the neighboring counties ; and, after a hotly contested canvass, the result showed Mr. Tyler's election by a small majority of about thirty votes. It was a mere trial of personal popularity, as they fully concurred in political principle ; and when Mr. Tyler retired from Congress he warmly advocated the election of Mr. Stevenson to that responsible station."

It will be seen that when Tyler entered Congress he was not yet twenty-seven years of age, and had he desired it, the short session for which he was elected gave him little opportunity to bring out his qualities. But he was by no means an idle spectator even at this time in Congress. The close of the war with Great Britain had brought forward in a new light some old questions, and others were arising which were destined to be settled by years of conflict, partly in Congress and partly on the field of battle. One thing clearly disclosed by this war was the necessity of better facilities for travel, transferring troops, and, in fact, all kinds of transportation and intercourse with all parts of the national domain. Even turnpikes were then unknown.

The question of internal improvement by the

authority of Congress now received a considerable impetus; and one of the last acts of Mr. Madison was to veto the bill admitting the Constitutional right of the National Government and providing for certain improvements under its direction. This measure Mr. Tyler opposed, on what was then claimed as Constitutional and State Rights grounds, while he saw the necessity of the improvements themselves.

Mr. Calhoun was, at this time, one of the champions of internal improvements. He, indeed, favored a grand scheme of improvements by the General Government by which he proposed to connect all parts of the country, bring the remotest interests into common support and consequence, and so harmonize and unify it as to make it an indissoluble, homogeneous whole.

The charter of the Bank of the United States had expired in 1811, and the war had, it was maintained, demonstrated the necessity for its recharter. Mr. Clay had now become its advocate. To this measure Mr. Tyler was opposed.

At this time, and for the next twelve years, Mr. Calhoun was passing through his national period. During the Administration of Mr. Monroe his slavery views were moderate and conciliatory, and there seemed to be nothing but time between him and the Presidency. Before the beginning of this century there had been little disposition to foster slavery anywhere, and with no difficulty and little opposition the Continental Congress, in 1787, had positively interdicted it in all that vast and not very

well-defined region called the North-western Territory. The tariff was still a question in 1816, on which men were not well settled, and many changes were destined to take place among the party leaders on this and other important points. The position Mr. Calhoun took in 1816, and from which himself and the whole Democratic party fell away subsequently as to internal improvements by the General Government, long ago became the undisputed practice of the country, as before set forth in other parts of this work. The absolute necessities of the country finally brought all political parties to acquiesce in a thing they could not avoid, that the great expansion, population, and wealth of the country required. All the vetoes from Jefferson down, all the successful opposition of the Democratic party to prevent improvements under the patronage of the General Government were; perhaps, unwise and, at all events, retarded the growth and development of the country. Still, however, it may be said that the country was thus stifled for half a century, the objections raised by the Democrats to a vast system of internal improvements under the pay and patronage of the Government were not mere matters of faction; nor is this question of internal improvements without foundation for serious discussion to-day, notwithstanding the politic considerations which recommend it to the favor of all parties. In the light of present practices on this subject it should be confessed that the Federalists and Whigs were, as they claimed to be, the truer friends of the country and the Republic.

To what quarter the honors were due as to the Bank of the United States and a general financial system, it may not, perhaps, be so readily and generally seen. The credit of destroying the bank (a calamitous feat at the time, but a blessing finally) is due to General Jackson and his party supporters; and to Martin Van Buren, James K. Polk, and the Democratic party is due the establishment of the independent National Treasury and the coin standard. With all their bad reputation on financial matters, were not the Democrats right and the Whigs wrong in this great matter? In the strange vicissitudes of politics the latter-day parties have materially shifted attitudes on this vital point. And a fair view of the whole field would not, perhaps, leave so vast a ground for boasting or for national honors, more on the side of one great political organization than the other. Since the world began, or the days of Lycurgus down to Andrew Jackson and the present time, money and revenues have been difficult themes, and good fortune more than superior wisdom has taken the lead in personal and party successes.

In speaking of the misfortunes or lost opportunities of Mr. Calhoun, Henry A. Wise says in his "Seven Decades :"—

"Unfortunately, the doctrine of strict construction in respect to the powers of the General Government to build roads and canals was opposed to the genius of the continent, and to the irresistible force of coming causes, which have operated since with a certainty and rapidity beyond all human calculations. . . . Had Mr. Calhoun

adhered to his first foundations of the system, resting himself upon the necessities and proper wants of the country's vast new settlements, he would probably have been the most influential public man of his day; he might have changed the destiny of the Southern section to which he belonged, and have made it keep pace with the progress of other sections of the country, which have since dwarfed it in the Union; and he might have preserved the popularity of the Democratic party, and been promoted to the Presidency."

But this Mr. Calhoun did not do. Unfortunately for him and the country, he gave himself to the work of perpetuating slavery and sectionalizing national legislation. And what relation did the party to which he belonged, in a general sense, sustain to his purposes? The War of 1812 demonstrated certain things, and made them plainer in reference to the powers and character of this Government, and the people under it; and it was claimed that it clearly exhibited the necessity of certain other things, as the want of a reliable and permanent financial agent, a bank, and a system of internal improvements. It was also claimed that the War with Mexico had its financial as well as other uses. It exhibited, it was held, the practicability and virtue of a metal currency and an independent treasury. Here the Democrats were the political victors. The War of the Rebellion also illustrated and settled on a vast scale some stupendous questions. It demonstrated that what Mr. Calhoun and his party contended for, for half a century, was neither wise and best for the section, nor for the Nation, and hence was wrong.

It destroyed the great cause of contention and impediment to general progress. Twenty years have passed away since the end of the great conflict, and what now is the verdict of the country and world as to the sides in the long and difficult contest? Had the spirit of 1787, and even the early years of the Federal Government, in the South continued to prevail, and slavery been lopped off where circumstances admitted from time to time, and gradually contracted within its narrow confines east of the Mississippi, the institution would have died of itself before 1861, or, at any rate, in the century. If slavery had been quietly pressed in the direction Washington, Jefferson, Judge Tyler, Madison, and hosts of other Southern men, would have given it, it never could have had a place in the politics of the country. The younger leaders gave this matter a new direction, and in the indisputable light of to-day they were wrong. Such is the verdict of events, and of the world.

But again returning to the great theme still remaining after the conflicts of a century, internal improvements, the eccentric Mr. Wise may again be quoted. He says:—

“Had they been begun in 1816–17, instead of being vetoed, and steadily pursued on a grand and impartial scale, extended equally to all sections, North, South, East, and West, in forty years this Union would have been bound together too indissolubly by homogeneity of interest ever to have been threatened and actually marred by the sectional war of 1861. Yes, even the mind of Mr. Calhoun erred lamentably in departing from that

foundation, and the Democratic party erred in not following his lead on that question, whether he continued to lead or not."

If 1861 and all its calamities could have been prevented in this way by a man and a party, as indicated by Mr. Wise, where must lie the responsibility for the great issues and evils resulting in the "sectional war?" Errors are misfortunes however simple they may be. To apologize for error in great and long continued evils and calamities can be no part of the task of this work.

CHAPTER III.

CONGRESSIONAL SERVICES—MR. TYLER'S EARLY VIEWS
ON INSTRUCTIONS—AS GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA.

DURING Mr. Tyler's first winter in Congress the question of compensation to members of that body was seriously discussed, and a former enactment on the subject repealed. Mr. Tyler had been expected by his constituents to vote for the repeal, and on this question he made his first and most considerable speech, from which the following extract is in harmony with his course in the Legislature in 1812, and while exhibiting his disposition in this case, served to bring forward a point now very generally ignored :—

“I acknowledge that, if instructions go to violate the Constitution, they are not binding, and why? My constituents have no right to violate the Constitution themselves, and they have, consequently, no right to require of me to do that which they themselves of right can not. But where no such violation is involved, I regard it as only necessary to know the wishes of my constituents in order that they may be obeyed. In my support of this doctrine, however, I wish not to be understood as speaking of a mere buzz or popular clamor, for I would be as little disposed to attend to a thing of that sort as any gentleman. I speak of the voice of a majority of the people, distinctly ascertained and plainly expressed.

"The gentleman from South Carolina mentioned the name of Edmund Burke. I venerate the talents of that distinguished orator as highly as any man; and I hold in high respect the memory and virtues of the illustrious Chatham; but, highly as I esteem the memories of those great statesmen, they will suffer no disparagement by a comparison with the immortal Sidney. I prefer to draw my principles from the father of the Church, from the man who fell a martyr in the cause of freedom, who consecrated his principles by his blood, from the fountain from which has flowed the principles of the very Constitution under which we act.

"I shall vote for a repeal of the compensation law, as I know it to be the wish of my constituents that it should be repealed. I have had a fair opportunity of knowing their wishes, for I am fresh from their hands. I am not disposed to hold up my constituents in the ridiculous light in which some gentlemen have represented theirs. I have too much respect for them to do so. They have looked to the large national debt, and think it requires reduction; they believe that economy is necessary. They see the tax-gatherers dispersed throughout the country, and they can not be made to understand why, at a time when retrenchment was so necessary, Congress should have increased their wages. It is vain to tell them, as some gentlemen very nice at calculation have made it appear, that each of them have only to bear an additional burden of one and a quarter cents. Their answer is at hand; they say, and have a right to say to you, Take the pressure from off our shoulders; we feel the weight of it; take the burden from *our* backs, then take it from your own. They go farther. Although they do not believe that this Congress is corrupt, they regard you as setting a bad example. They look forward to distant and, perhaps, less honest times, when wicked men, profiting by your example, may vote themselves ample fortunes, and laugh at the people whose

trust they thus abused. I repeat, that my constituents do not think this Congress corrupt for having passed this law. They look here, and see men who have devoted their youth and manhood to the service of their country, who have grown old at the helm of the vessel. They see among you many who have rode out in security the boisterous storm of faction and of party, and have avoided the whirlpools which threatened to swallow up both you and them. They look to this field, and see many of you who are willing to expose your own breasts to receive the lightning ere it should fall upon the bosom of your country; and I repeat it, they do not distrust your patriotism, but they strongly disapprove your course. It is not for me to inquire into the correctness of their opinions. It is enough that I know their will to cause me to obey it."

Clayton, of Delaware, and Grosvenor, of New York, vehemently opposed the whole doctrine of instructions, rejecting the idea that members of Congress should be subject to anything but their own judgment of right and wrong; also setting forth the wider ground that a Congressman, although elected by a district in a State, in his services in Congress becomes the representative of the country in general.

Of Tyler in Congress at this time one of his biographers says :—

"As a new member, custom, not less than the modesty which is ever the accompaniment of real merit, prohibited him from at once taking the active part in the proceedings of the House which his known talents and capacity would have fully warranted; and this being the short session of the Legislature, and engrossed for the most part by measures which had originated at the one preceding, it was not to be expected that Mr. Tyler would thrust himself

forward, in the way of the many distinguished men then in Congress who were their advocates or opponents. Yet even during this period we shall not find him idle; and the same firm and uncompromising regard for popular rights and high sense of representative duty which had marked his career in the Assembly of his native State forbade his being entirely inactive during the discussions which occupied the short portion of time for which he had been elected." •

In April, 1817, Mr. Tyler was again elected to Congress by a considerable majority over Mr. Stevenson, his competitor. At the ensuing session he opposed the recognition of the South American republics, and voted against sending a minister to La Plata. He also opposed an amendment to the Constitution for clearly defining the powers of the General Government as to internal improvements. He opposed a bill providing a system of bankruptcy, and in a speech against it said:—

"In my judgment, sir, this law is calculated to introduce fraud to an extent certainly never witnessed in this country. Will not this bill, should it pass into a law, become here what it is on the other side of the water? What has been the course of things there? Has the embezzlement of effects been prevented there? The Parliament has gone so far as to make the concealment of effects by the bankrupt punishable with death; and yet how often is the crime committed! Every inducement is held out by the law to dishonesty; a starving wife and children implore bread and protection at the hands of the husband and father; your law tempts him to secure it for them by concealing his money or effects, by proclaiming to him, 'Be secret for some three or four months, until the present

storm has subsided—until your creditors have given you a certificate of discharge—and then you may in safety enjoy the fruits of your dishonesty.’ But, sir, what more does it do? Why it holds out the temptation in one hand and the punishment in the other. Conscious of the difficulty of preventing fraud, in what way does this bill undertake to guard against it? You first put a man upon his oath; you then hold out inducements to informers; and even this is not all: you then call upon the wife to give testimony in condemnation of her husband, thereby breaking up the marital bonds, and altering the established laws of society. The lovely, delicate, trembling female is rudely dragged before the tribunal created by this bill, and reduced to the condition of either swearing falsely, or of convicting her husband of perjury. Away then, say I, with a system to be executed only by such means! If you wish your citizens to be honest and virtuous, do not, by your legislation, hold out an invitation to a different state of things. A republican government can only be supported by virtue; and the end of all legislation should be to encourage our fellow-citizens in its daily practice.”

At this session Mr. Tyler was put on the committee for examining the books and affairs of the Bank of the United States, and in the course of the discussion on the report of this committee he said:—

“Having thus, Mr. Chairman, disposed of the objections to these expressions in the report, I proceed to an investigation of the subject more immediately under consideration. The question, whether it be proper to issue a *scire facias* against the bank, divides itself into two heads of inquiry. First, whether the charter has been so violated as to inure a forfeiture? And if so, is it expedient to exact the forfeiture? The decision of the first would preclude me from an inquiry into the second; for, inas-

much as I believe the creation of this corporation to be unconstitutional, I can not, without a violation of my oath, hesitate to repair the breach thus made in the Constitution, when an opportunity presents itself of doing so without violating the public faith. But believing also that it is expedient to put it down, and other gentlemen feeling themselves at liberty to follow up that inquiry, I propose to express to you my views on that subject.

"I premise, then, that this charter has been violated; and that, if subjected to an investigation before a court of justice, it will be declared null and void. I would only have you look to the long catalogue of crime detailed in the report—to those practices calculated only to pamper a few at the expense of the many; to the corruption which, by its illicit gains, almost laughs at your power. Shall we be told, with these facts staring us in the face, that this charter has not been violated? Say that no particular clause has been violated, that the votes were taken according to the first fundamental article in the charter, that the \$7,000,000 in specie required has all been paid in—yet I demand to know if the great objects of the institution have not been defeated. You create a thing for good, and not for evil; yet the good in a great measure vanishes, and evil alone exists. You incorporate a company for the purpose of advancing the interests of all concerned; and the machine thus created is managed exclusively for the aggrandizement of a few, and not for the good of all. Is not this, to adopt the rule laid down by the committee, so to misuse the powers granted as to defeat the objects of the charter? The most reprehensible proceeding takes place, almost every object expressed in the charter is disappointed; and can it still be insisted that the corporation has not forfeited its franchises? It is a broad and great principle for which I contend. It is for the doctrine of responsibility due from the creature to the creator—the principle on which our Government is founded.

The President is invested with certain powers; yet, if he abuses or misuses those powers, he forfeits his high place, the object of his election is disappointed. So in regard to every other officer of the Government. Shall a corporation alone be irresponsible? There is nothing in reason or in law to justify the idea. . . .

“You wished a bank with a sufficient specie basis to cause its notes to pass currently for gold and silver. As a great means for accomplishing this object certain fundamental articles were laid down. The first article limited the number of votes to be given by each stockholder. It was intended to deny to the large stockholders the power of defeating your intentions, and yet what is done? Evasion is resorted to; and, in the outset, the stipulations of the contract were violated, and, instead of giving but thirty votes, one individual gives 1,100 on 1,100 shares! The stockholder has accepted a covenant on certain positive conditions; he has agreed to carry it into execution in good faith; and yet, the moment after, he violates a fundamental article. He has also expressly agreed that it shall be fulfilled or forfeited; and still, when the fact of non-fulfillment is conclusively established, it is contended that no forfeiture ensues! I should rely strongly upon the ground that a violation of a fundamental article produced a forfeiture. That which is fundamental can not be changed. Can you remove the pillars of this charter, and yet expect it to stand? Can you remove the foundation, and suppose the fabric will remain? It is only necessary to state the proposition in order to receive the answer. The gentleman from South Carolina has asserted that this violation was the consequence of the acts of particular individuals, and not of the corporate body, and that therefore no forfeiture ensues. How many persons there were concerned in the violation of this article is at least problematical. Let it be recollected that Mr. Leiper says in his deposition (and he was not only a director, but a

judge of the election) that he divided his shares, and that it was generally done for the purpose of affecting the election. It never was discountenanced by the directors. They suffered the violation to take place under their very noses; many of them were individually concerned in it, and not a syllable of reprehension was uttered."

In the session of the winter of 1818, the conduct of the Seminole war was discussed, and an attempt made to censure the course of General Jackson especially in the execution of Arbuthnot and Ambrister. Mr. Tyler was one of the foremost in condemning the extreme and unauthorized conduct of Jackson, and for this was never forgiven or forgotten by the General, although he not only supported Jackson for the Presidency but also to a great extent supported his Administration.

The following valuable extract is taken from Mr. Tyler's speech before the House in support of the resolution to disapprove a part of Jackson's course:—

"Your liberties can not be preserved by the fame of any man. The triumph of the hero may swell the pride of your country—elevate you in the estimation of foreign nations—give to you a character for chivalry and valor; but recollect, I beseech you, that the sheet-anchor of our safety is to be found in the Constitution of our country. Say that you ornament these walls with the trophies of victory—that the flags of conquered nations wave over your head—what avail these symbols of your glory if your Constitution be destroyed? To this pillar, then, will I cling. *Measures*, not *men*—and I beg gentlemen to recollect it—has ever been our favorite motto. Shall we abandon it now? Why do gentlemen point to the services of the hero in former wars? For his conduct there he has

received a Nation's plaudits and a Nation's gratitude. We come to other acts. If our motto be just, we must look alone to the *act*, not to the *actor*. It is only then that we shall judge correctly. A republic should act as in the case of the Roman Manlius, and disapprove the conduct of her dearest son, if that son has erred. From what quarter do you expect your liberties to be successfully invaded? Not from the man whom you despise; against him you are always prepared to act—his example will not be dangerous. You have more to fear from a Nation's favorite; from him whose path has been a path of glory, who has won your gratitude and confidence; against his errors you have to guard, lest they should grow into precedents, and become, in the end, the law of the land. It is the *precedent* growing out of the proceedings in this case that I wish to guard against. It is this consideration, and *this only*, which will induce me to disapprove the conduct of General Jackson."

In the spring of 1819 Mr. Tyler was re-elected to Congress, this time without opposition. He had pursued a course gratifying to his State, and under the "reign of good-will" which had set in under Mr. Monroe, there was little political strife in the country. The Democratic or Republican party had unlimited sway. From Virginia at this time in the House were William S. Archer, Philip P. Barbour, General John Floyd, Charles Fenton Mercer, and two or three other valuable men; and in both branches of Congress there was no scarcity of men of ability. In the sessions of 1819 and 1820, the question as to the admission of Missouri was the most important matter before Congress and the country. Mr. Tyler was opposed to any kind of restrictions on the

admission of Missouri, and in the winter of 1819, took an active part in the debate. In the following winter the discussion was exhausted, and the country was glad to get temporary peace in the Compromise, which was indorsed by Mr. Monroe and all his Cabinet. In a short speech at this time in reply to John Sergeant Mr. Tyler said:—

“During the present session I maintained a profound silence on the interesting topic which has so long engaged the attention of the House and Nation. Nothing but the *exposé* which has been made to the House by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Sergeant) could have induced me now to present myself to the notice of the House upon a subject so hackneyed. The remarks made by that gentleman are of a character so novel and alarming that it would not become me to pass them by unnoticed. The gentleman (Mr. Sergeant) has talked about the balance of power. What is it that he means by this language? Has he well weighed it before he gave it utterance? To my mind the gentleman has conjured up a fearful fiend. He has told us that no danger was to be apprehended from keeping alive this question. He has cried ‘Peace, peace,’ when he has presented himself as fighting under the banners of a fiend from which I can not but turn with fear and dismay. Look on the page of history, and tell me what has been the most fruitful cause of war, of rapine, and of death? Has it been any other than this struggle for the balance of power? Desolation has in all ages marked its existence, and hecatombs of slaughtered victims have been raised to appease its fury. Sir, it is a monster that feasts on the bodies of mangled carcasses, and swills on human blood. And has it come to this, that we are now to enter into this struggle for power? Against whom do gentlemen propose to carry on this war? Against

brethren—members of the same common family. It might be natural to wish to elevate ourselves to a superiority of power in reference to foreign nations; but it is unnatural, to say the least of it, for one section of a common country to entertain a wish of the sort in reference to the rest. Equality is all that can be asked for, and that equality is secured to each State of this Union by the Constitution of the land. But what is the character of the power sought now to be obtained by the gentleman and his associates? Do they want to secure to the non-slaveholding States a preponderance in the National Legislature? We have been told correctly by the gentleman from New York (Mr. Storrs) that they already have the preponderance of twenty odd votes. This, then, it is obvious, can not be the power, for the acquisition of which they are ready to undertake this crusade against the South and West. I follow but the inference which the member from New York has drawn, when I express the hypothesis that it must be a power of a different character which gentlemen are in pursuit of. It may be their purpose to elevate to high stations some particular favorites. Some may be prompted by the 'patriotic ambition' of the gentleman from Maine (Mr. Cushman)—an ambition which may be sorely disappointed by the settlement of this question at the present session. I will not ascribe any such motive to the gentleman from Pennsylvania. I have heretofore admired him for his talents, and I will not permit myself to indulge too hastily an unfavorable impression towards him. But what can a majority of this House hope to gain by this unhallowed struggle? It is a game at which only a few can win, and all that will remain to the majority of the actors in this drama will be the slave-like privilege of worshipping at the feet of an idol. And has it come to this, that, instead of looking to the advancement of our country's happiness, we shall now use our efforts to advance the political views of an individual? I should be

willing to sacrifice myself on the altar of my country for the common good. I idolize the institutions of this highly favored land, but I never will consent to become the idolater of any *man* on earth. I know but of one rule to govern me in selecting men for office, and it is found in the wisdom, intelligence, and virtue of the candidate. Whether he be born in Massachusetts or Virginia is a consideration unworthy of being taken into the estimate. If, then, there be a man in this House or Nation governed by motives of a different character, in the name of virtue and patriotism I demand that he shall abjure them."

Mr. Tyler took an active interest in the tariff measures now brought before Congress, in his position and arguments standing with the old announced principles of the Jefferson Democracy. Mr. Tyler has been accused of being a man of indolent and careless habits; but at this period he had certainly exhibited nothing of the kind. His life had been more than ordinarily active, as nothing else could possibly, not family, blood, chivalry, wealth, nor anything else, have given him such remarkable and unbroken success. He was a member of the Committee of Ways and Means, and conscientiously and laboriously performed his duties in connection with that position. Indeed, before the close of the short session of the winter of 1820 his health was so broken, in part from this labor, that he was induced to resign his seat in Congress, and return to his home in Virginia. At the succeeding election he was not a candidate. For the next two years he remained quietly engaged on his farm, taking little part in public affairs; but in the spring of 1823 he

was elected to the Legislature, and in December again appeared in that body. For the next two years he was annually returned to the House of Delegates, and at this time was one of its most able and industrious members. Always an orator, his opportunities in the last six years had still improved him, although a certain impracticable and far-off kind of extravagance always did attach to the speech-making of Mr. Tyler as to General Harrison's, and that of many other public men, a kind of useless, antiquated, Greek-and-Roman sophomoric style—a style now rapidly giving way to pure, simple, manly, vigorous language, filled with thought and reason.

An admirer of Mr. Tyler said, in speaking of his oratory at this period:—

“He is a most eloquent speaker. His allusions are sublime; and, when he speaks, all the powers of his mind seem absorbed in his subject. There is no coldness, no art, no speaking for the sake of speaking, in his observations; but his whole intellect appears wrapped in, and riveted to, the question before the House. He is vehement, impetuous, and ardent in his manner; he evidently feels intensely, and causes every heart to feel. It is impossible to be diverted from his remarks by the casual introduction of any extraneous thought. While he commands his own soul, and exercises over it a fervent and energetic control, he commands the souls of all who are susceptible to the effects of oratory. He ranges every spot of classic and fairy ground to cull illustrations of his arguments; and he hurries along, and hurries his hearers along, with a mixture of powerful reasoning, classic allusions, and elegant figures; intermingling with the flow

of debate flowers and roses plucked from the loveliest fields of Parnassus."

Now, think of that! In after-life most of Mr. Tyler's public speeches lost much of this Parnassus or Pegasus style; and his messages and addresses were mainly plain, earnest, pure, vigorous, unpretentious productions, suffering little by comparison with those of the most solid and able thinkers of his own and other times. Then he never was so bad as the foregoing foolish extract makes him appear.

Although Mr. Tyler did not support the now universally adopted doctrine of internal improvements under the patronage of the General Government, he did favor a thorough system of improvements by the State, and in this respect he now made himself felt in the Legislature of Virginia. His views and qualities were undoubtedly valued highly at this time among the men of his State. Nothing would, perhaps, better confirm this fact than his election by the Legislature as Governor, in December, 1825, by a vote of one hundred and thirty-one against eighty-one for General John Floyd, and a few scattering.

On this event the following letters passed:—

TO JOHN TYLER, ESQ.

"RICHMOND, December 10, 1825.

"SIR,—We take great pleasure in announcing to you, in obedience to a resolution of the House of Delegates, your election on this day to the government or chief magistracy of this commonwealth for one year. I have the honor to be, with great consideration, your fellow-citizen.

"S. BLACKBURN, in behalf of the Committee."

TO GENERAL SAMUEL BLACKBURN.

"RICHMOND, December 12, 1825.

"SIR,—The General Assembly has conferred on me a great honor. In accepting it, I shall make no professions of patriotism. Public agents should be judged of by their acts; and my constant exertions shall be directed to the fulfillment of the obligations imposed by the Constitution and the laws. I trust that neither the rights nor the interests of Virginia will suffer disparagement at my hands.

"I tender to you, sir, and the Committee of the House of Delegates, and through you to the General Assembly, assurances of the highest respect. JOHN TYLER."

The four or five years elapsing between Mr. Tyler's early service in Congress and his election as Governor of Virginia, on the 10th of December, 1825, were by no means inactively spent, although he had withdrawn from Congress somewhat broken in health. In March, 1813, he had been married, and now he had the good fortune to come into possession of the old family homestead, "Greenway," where he settled down with every reason to be satisfied with his past successes. At this period he renewed his interest in William and Mary College, of which he afterwards became a rector and chancellor, and did much to elevate and perpetuate this old institution. At this time he delivered several addresses of some note, and in the Legislature was especially fortunate in some of his speeches.

On entering upon his office as governor Mr. Tyler at once gave his attention to public improvements and other matters of interest to his State. In his

annual message in December, 1826, in speaking of public education and of internal improvements, he said:—

“Among those subjects possessed of the most manifest importance in the accomplishment of this end, is the organization of a system for the diffusion of general instruction among the great mass of the people. If the mind be set free from the bonds in which ignorance would bind it, the body will sooner or later partake of its condition; and the most effectual mode of enslaving the one is by benighting the other. This is sufficiently evinced by the history of the world in all its stages. Not to go farther in search of an example, we might be content to refer to that period of English history when, under the early kings, all the learning was confined to the clergy, and it was denounced as an offense of high magnitude for any other than a priest to be found in possession even of a Bible. This was the age of slavery, the offspring of mental ignorance and superstition. That age was succeeded by one of greater light and greater liberty; and in all countries the amelioration or debasement of man’s condition has been the constant attendant on the spread of intelligence, or the extinguishment of the lights of science. With us new motives exist for so enlarging the means of instruction as to embrace all the community. The happiness or misery of any individual is for the greater part merely comparative, and what is true as to an individual is also true in regard to a community. Hence the great importance in a government like ours, which fears no comparison with any other that has ever existed, but claims a proud pre-eminence above them, that the mass of its citizens should be well informed. A government emphatically of the people necessarily rests for its support and durability on them, and their general instruction becomes, therefore, a desideratum of the first importance; otherwise they are

apt to be made the ready instruments in the hands of the designing for the overthrow of all that is dear and valuable. These truths have evermore been acknowledged, and your predecessors in the Legislative Hall, acting under their influence, have not been unmindful of the solemn duties which they imposed. The university at Charlottesville has commenced its career under circumstances the most flattering, and promises fully to crown the hopes and wishes of the State. It exists as a proud monument of legislative wisdom, and excites to new exertions in the same generous cause of literature and science. Its immediate benefits must, however, be confined to a few; and I turn, therefore, with anxious solicitude to the examination of that system whose efforts are directed to the diffusion of information among the great body of the people. On this subject, and all others to which, in the exercise of my duty under the Constitution, I may advert, I shall speak openly and without reserve. We are fellow-laborers in the same common cause, the cause of our country; and I should justly be esteemed as unworthy the station which I hold did I cloak or dissemble my opinion on any question connected with the public good."

In the winter of 1826 he was re-elected to the governorship, but before serving out the next year was, in January, 1827, elected United States Senator by a vote of one hundred and fifteen against one hundred and ten for the notorious John Randolph of Roanoke. This was a close election, and created some ill-feeling, and Mr. Tyler was accused of treachery in securing his success. Mr. Randolph had become offensive to some of his former State Rights friends, and by the union of these and the supporters of the Administration and friends of Webster and Clay with Mr. Tyler's friends,

Randolph was defeated. Tyler, perhaps, preferred to be Governor of Virginia, and was, no doubt, willing for Randolph to be returned. The charge of treachery was a partisan cry; at least no ground for it can be found.

The following letter casts some light upon the subject:—

“RICHMOND, January 13, 1827.

“GENTLEMEN,—Your note, handed to me last night by Mr. Goode, in which you say, ‘We understand that *the friends of the Administration, and others*, will support you for the Senate in opposition to Mr. Randolph;’ and desire to understand *distinctly* whether they have my consent or not; and if not, requesting me to say *explicitly* that I will not abandon the Chair of State at this time to accept a seat in the Senate, deserves, and shall have, a candid reply. Let me premise that I am unacquainted with the political preferences of those disposed to sustain me for the Senate; suffice it to say, that my political preferences on the fundamental principles of the Government are the same with those espoused by Mr. Randolph, and that I admire him most highly for his undeviating attachment to the Constitution, manifested at all times, and through the events of a long political life; and if any man votes for me under a different persuasion, he most grievously deceives himself. You ask me whether I have yielded my consent to oppose him. On the contrary, I have constantly opposed myself to all solicitations. I desire most earnestly to be left at peace. There is no motive which could induce me to seek to change my present station for a seat in the Senate at this time. I can not admit that to be *one* in a body of forty-eight members is to occupy a more elevated station than that presented in the chief magistracy of Virginia. My private interests, intimately connected with the good of my family, are

more highly sustained by remaining where I am than by the talked-of change. There is, then, no consideration, either public or private, which could lead me to desire it. From the first to the last, everywhere, and to all with whom I have conversed, this has been my uniform language.

"Your last inquiry is one which, when urged by those inclined to support me, I have constantly declined to answer. Propriety, and a due regard to consistency of deportment, requires me to decline an answer now. Should the office, in opposition to my wishes (a result which I can not anticipate), be conferred upon me, I shall then give to the expression of the legislative will such reflection, and pronounce such decision as my sense of what is due to it may seem to require.

"These explanations might have been had by each and all of you, gentlemen, verbally, if you had sought to obtain them in that way, which might possibly have denoted a greater degree of confidence in me; but as they are now given, you are at liberty to use them in any mode you may please, reserving to myself a similar privilege.

"With sentiments of proper respect, your most obedient servant,

JOHN TYLER.

"TO LINN BANKS, ALEXANDER SMYTH, WILLIAM F. GORDON, DANIEL A. WILSON, and WILLIAM O. GOODE, Esqs."

This election occurred on the 13th of January, 1827, and soon afterwards Mr. Tyler handed in his resignation as Governor of the State, amidst the general good wishes of those he had served. On the 11th of July, 1826, Governor Tyler delivered, by invitation, at Richmond, an oration on the "Life and Character of Mr. Jefferson," which has been deemed one of his most eloquent and noteworthy performances.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. TYLER IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES—HE
MAKES A RECORD.

IN December, 1827, Mr. Tyler took his seat in the Senate of the United States; and although he had been elected over Mr. Randolph by the friends of the Administration, he ranged himself at once on the side of the opposition. That he would do so was, however, well understood at Richmond. The latitude of Mr. Adams's first great annual message was theoretically ominous. It had too high a ring for a federal government. The grand scheme of national improvement and progress it faintly held out was premature, at least. So thought the Richmond politician. Another generation of men of more expanded views could better see that the States never would, and never could, without the whip of a supreme central power, make this vast national domain what it has risen to be since the Presidency of John Quincy Adams. The anti-progress dogma of State Rights gradually gave way, finally being almost extirpated, root and branch, in the recent war. And although this dogma still survives, it has ceased to obstruct the way of national prosperity, only serving as a gag to public extravagance, a function in which it was always beneficial.

Little occurred with Mr. Tyler, out of the ordinary routine work of a Congressman, to be worthy of note here. President-making was by far the most important work on the hands of politicians generally at this time, both in and out of Congress. Although Mr. Tyler had not found himself in harmony with some of the acts of General Jackson, and although he had not sustained him as President Adams had done in what the world has never acknowledged to be right in any sense, he was now fully committed, as a Democrat, to his support, as the successor of Mr. Adams. In this course, and in opposing the Tariff Law of 1828, and most other measures of the Administration party, Mr. Tyler was fully in accord with the general spirit and demands of the Jackson Democracy. The National Republican or Adams party, having in it the old Federalists mainly, was now crystallizing into a fixed organization, with doctrines looked upon with suspicion, or determinedly opposed by Mr. Tyler and the old-line Republicans. Men were now giving way with the Administration wing of politics to principles. Internal improvements, tariff, protection, Mr. Clay's "American System," and a general spirit of progress animated its leaders, but all in a manner startling and appalling to the opposing wing, now absorbed in Jacksonianism. General Jackson had always been a Democrat; he was believed to have ability, and he was known to have a certain kind of force about him that no other man possessed; and, above all things, he was a soldier, and it was wisely calculated that the cry

of New Orleans would carry him through. That he had in him more than many of his supporters knew or desired, and that he would in many respect give a new direction to the old party, and a new policy to all parties, from his time, was by no means generally suspected. But even old Federalists were cajoled into voting for him; all objections were met by a hurrah for Jackson, and in the election of 1828 "Old Hickory" swept the country.

But General Jackson never forgot the position Mr. Tyler took in 1819 on his course in Florida, and there was no friendship between them. Mr. Tyler was a friend of Calhoun, and after Mr. Calhoun abandoned his grand West Point and army schemes, and internal improvement theories, stood by his side mainly in the extreme Southern school of Democracy. This faction was only at times in harmony with the measures of the new, or Jackson, order of things. To bring about his election, all factions of the Democratic party had been brought into line. The Pro-slaveryites, the Free Traders, the Strict Constructionists, State Rights—all had swelled the shout for Jackson; but all were not alike blessed in the result.

In the first session of Congress after General Jackson came into office, a grand pension scheme was proposed in a bill from the House, as one of the political devices from time to time brought forward, to drain and tax the country in the name of charity and gratitude. This bill Mr. Tyler opposed on the grounds of its partiality, and the feature of still

discriminating between troops of the Continental and State lines in the Revolution, and on the ground that "the Government has no right to be munificent at the expense of the people, nor is there here present occasion for it." He subsequently, however, spoke in favor of and assisted in the passage of a pension act for the benefit of the Revolutionary soldiers of Virginia. The State of Virginia had placed herself under obligations to her soldiers, and they held a lien on the lands which she had ceded to the United States, and thus the United States had acquired the proprietorship of this lien. On this point mainly he rested this claim for relief. On the bill authorizing the Government to subscribe to the stock of the Maysville Turnpike Mr. Tyler spoke at length, using substantially the arguments of the leaders of the Democratic party against extending the patronage of the Government to any form of internal improvement. A part of Mr. Tyler's remarks on this bill need to be repeated here, as showing his belief, or apparent belief, that the United States was not a nation at all; that the States of which it was composed were separate nations; that he knew not the word national as applied to this country; and that an attempt on the part of Congress or any kind of Government at Washington to legislate for local interests would render it an absolute despotism. The labored zeal with which the enemies of internal improvements attacked every advance of its friends, and the air of wisdom and prophecy they assumed as to the results are matters

of curiosity to-day, even among their political descendants. It is not easy now to avoid the impression that much of this loud zeal on both sides was really political charlatanry. The memory of the party leaders and their criers of any creed, who by their errors prevented the right or retarded the growth of the country, can not be deemed brighter and prouder by their having done so.

Read the following interesting passages from Mr. Tyler's speech on the Maysville and Lexington Turnpike :—

“If we subscribe to this undertaking, where shall we stop? What company shall we deny, or what work shall we refuse to aid? Will you assist all works of equal extent, every road of sixty miles in length? If we do not, shall we not be justly chargeable with injustice? Upon what principle is it that we shall limit our subscription to roads of precisely the same extent with this? Why not, if they shall fall a little short of this? I ask of gentlemen to show me the limit of their principle. Pass this bill, and no man can set bounds to the applications which will be made to us at the next session. We shall have a perfect jumble of all manner of schemes and plans, national and local, public and private; in lawyer's phrase, a perfect hotchpot. Can any government bear such an operation? Can any community exist in peace under such a system? It will terminate precisely as has done another magnificent scheme. Four or five years ago our ingenious politicians found the power in the Constitution to improve harbors, and to make our rivers navigable. They began with roadsteads for the navy, and in what has it terminated?

“Let our observation this session illustrate. We have got to surveying creeks which have hardly water

enough to keep in operation a common grist-mill. The appropriation made but the other day for the survey of Mousen River, in the State of Maine—in the face, too, of an explanation of its actual condition made by the chairman of the Committee of Commerce—has left no room to hope that any opposition to the bill now under consideration will be successful. It is, nevertheless, my duty, as a member of the committee who reported this bill, to state to the Senate the objections which I have to it. When the subject was before that committee it was attempted to show that it was but the part of a scheme more enlarged and extensive. It was said to be but a link in a great road hereafter to be finished by this Government from Zanesville, in Ohio, to a point opposite to Maysville, on the Ohio River, and from Lexington to Nashville, and thence on to Florence, in Alabama. On this ground it claimed nationality of character. The chain was broken by the interposition of the Ohio River; and what is to be done to supply it I do not know. A bridge would scarcely be thought of, and a ferry founded by authority of this Government might subject to too severe a test this road-making power. But it is the easiest thing imaginable to make a road a national road. Every road in the country readily becomes so. Each is connected with every other; whether by a straight line or otherwise, is not material. . . .

“The internal policy of the States is prescribed, the industry of the country is regulated, and all the mere charities of life executed as fully by this Government as by an imperial monarch. The States are sinking every day, with accelerated velocity, into the condition of mere provinces, and a great National Government is growing out of the ruins of the confederacy. Can the people of these States be reconciled to this? Will they continue supine until the whole fabric of the Government is changed? Sir, does any one believe that we can exist

under a consolidated National Government? Look to the present condition of things and the question is answered. I ask every member of this House whether it could have been conceived that, when this American system was entered upon, the results which are now constantly transpiring would have arisen? What scenes are exhibited on the legislative floor under the influence of the feelings of local interest? I do but glance at them, and will not dwell upon them. When were sectional lines ever before so strongly drawn? But I forbear, sir; I forbear. Let those who believe that a National Government may best suit our condition turn to the map, and his doubts will be solved. A country embracing so great an extent of territory, possessing such a diversity of interests; one extremity congealed by the frosts of an almost perpetual winter, the other parched by tropical suns. Can a National Legislature know the interests of these extremes, feel their wants, and advance their wishes? It is vain to disguise it; a central Government here, call it by what name you will, which shall attempt to legislate for local interests, is an open and manifest despotism. Ingenuity is tortured to bring this Government to this. The first fruits are bitter enough; combinations have arisen, and combination will follow combination to the end of the chapter."

The fate of this bill is well known. With General Jackson's message vetoing it, were presented all the most fair and convincing arguments of the party and the day. The struggle on this question was one of the most desperate and long-continued which ever disturbed the politics of this country. No sooner was a bill vetoed than another was devised, and the champions on both sides girded themselves afresh for the contest.

In the fall of 1829, before the meeting of Congress, President Jackson, at his own option, without consulting the Senate sent commissioners to negotiate a treaty with Turkey, with which power this Government had not held relations. Mr. Tyler opposed this conduct, and the bill for the outfit of a minister to that country. A similar proceeding had occurred under Mr. Jefferson (in sending a Minister to Russia where there had been no representative from this country), and Mr. Madison who had sent three additional ministers to Ghent; and even Mr. Monroe, another Democratic President, had declared his right to do the same thing, as also did John Quincy Adams. Although the appropriations to pay the negotiators and for the outfit for the new minister at the new diplomatic court were made, they were done with a proviso which was offered by Mr. Tyler that the Senate did not approve the President's course, or sanction his assumption of authority in sending agents to negotiate a treaty without the consent of the Senate.

In the session of the winter of 1831, Mr. Tyler made his most considerable speech on the tariff, a yet fruitful source of political strife in this country. "His speech on this occasion was continued for three days, and evinced an extensive knowledge of the subject; and it was characterized by a warmth, earnestness, and depth of eloquence, which gave ample evidence of the intensity of his feeling on a topic which then excited much of the public attention at the South. He was opposed to a tariff specially for the protection of home industry, but in favor of a

tariff for revenue which might incidentally afford such protection, and he expressed an anxiety for such an adjustment of the question as would restore peace and harmony to the Union." While a great part of these early and elaborate speeches on this difficult subject is still of some interest, yet they were so interspersed with personal and other worthless allusions and encumbered with fictitious ceremony as to render their repetition undesirable here.

The most exciting subject before Congress at this session was that relating to the rechartering of the Bank of the United States. Mr. Tyler voted against every provision designed to favor the Bank, and favored every one looking towards restricting its privileges. He also opposed the final bill, after having given his aid to render the measure as little objectionable as possible. He also took a hand in the nullification business before Congress and the Administration. Without directly upholding the course of South Carolina, Mr. Tyler opposed the President's force proclamation, vehemently opposed the Force Bill to coerce the fractious State, took the most extreme State Rights position, denied that he was a citizen of the United States, or that there ever was or ever could be such a thing as a citizen of the United States, claimed that the United States gave him no protection at home or abroad, and that Virginia alone did that or anything else for him. The following extract from his long and wordy speech on the Force Bill will be a matter of strange interest as coming from a man who arose to the Presidency, as

well as serve to exhibit his peculiar tendencies and characteristics :—

“The pernicious doctrine that this is a National and not a Federal Government has received countenance from the late proclamation and message of the President. The people are regarded as one mass, and the States as constituting one Nation. I desire to know when this chemical process occurred. When were the States welded together into one mass? Was it before or since the Revolution? At what time was Virginia fused into an integral mass with the other States? Was it when she set herself up in opposition to Cromwell and refused to recognize the commonwealth; asserted her independence of the Protector’s government; declared that the ligament which bound her to England was a ligament which bound her to the crown of England, and that when the head which wore that crown was severed from the body, the tie of her allegiance was also broken? Or was it at the accession of Charles the Second, when she renewed her allegiance by and through a resolution of her House of Burgesses? She then acquired that title which she has borne ever since, ‘the Dominion of Virginia.’ Or did it occur at a later period? Was it in 1775, when she adopted her State Constitution, and exercised complete and sovereign power? Or did it occur when the Colonies, then become free, sovereign, and independent States, united their common energies and resources to make good their declaration of independence? This position would prove too much; it would go to the extent of proving that France was also amalgamated with the States. She was a party to that war: a most efficient party. She spared neither her treasure nor her blood. Her chivalric sons aided ours in upbearing the flag of freedom. The idea is idle—I had almost said absurd—to attempt to deduce from such a source the doctrine that the States formed one mass, one Nation. Why, sir, sovereigns may form a league for war,

or any other purpose; that league may be more or less intimate according to its terms; a league to preserve perpetual amity for the advancement of the happiness and welfare of all; the conditions are all subject to the will of the parties.

“The conclusion to which this false assumption leads is, that all sovereignty is vested in this Government. And yet it is but a creature of the States—an emanation of their will. It would, with as much force, be contended that an ambassador was a sovereign. The ambassador is bound by his instructions, and are not we? The moment he exceeds his instructions his power is annulled. The Constitution contains our instructions, and when we exceed our power, we are guilty of a breach of trust, and are responsible to our masters. What sort of sovereignty is this? If we had Hobbes, with his doctrine, that kings reign by divine right, and are the Lord’s anointed, to help us to a source for the sovereignty of this Government, we should still be puzzled to find it. Who created you a Government? You hold your existence at the pleasure of these States, and yet are sovereign over them. They may strike you out of existence by a word; demolish the Constitution, and scatter its fragments to the winds; and yet this Government, the breath of their nostrils, dares proclaim itself the only sovereign, and declares the sovereignty of the States a mere nonentity. For my part, I utterly renounce this doctrine. It is not only untrue and illogical, but anti-American. The great American idea was, and is, that sovereignty resides alone with the people, and that public servants are but their agents. . . .

“The opposite inference which is attempted to be drawn from the mere fact that this Government may punish treason, is, in my opinion, wholly fallacious. Treason against the United States consists ‘in waging war against them, and giving aid and comfort to their enemies;’ war is levied against the United States, or aid is given to their

enemies. Now let me put a case. Suppose this feature had not been introduced into the Constitution; was it not evident that there would have existed no power to punish the offense designated? would any one State have had a right to punish it? If a citizen of the State of Massachusetts had gone into foreign parts, raised forces, and made a descent upon Virginia, Massachusetts could not have punished the offense, and Virginia could only have regarded the aggressor in the light of an enemy, piratical, predatory, if you please, sir, but still an enemy. No law of treason could have covered the case. The concession of this power by the States was indispensably necessary to the preservation of each, and, by necessary inference, the preservation of the Union. Power to punish this offense is, then, given, and properly given. But it produces no transfer of allegiance, no more than a right to punish piracy on the high seas. But can this Government punish treason against a State? Suppose a minority oppose the authorities of a State Government: this may or may not be treason against the State, according to its laws; but, as to this Government, it is an insurrection, which, upon demand made by the constituted authorities of the State, it is bound to assist in suppressing. Treason is as well punishable by a State as by this Government; and if the argument proves anything, it establishes the conclusion that the State is invested with all the attributes of sovereignty, and that this Government is also invested with complete sovereignty, which leaves the argument in no better condition than we found it; in other words, makes it no argument at all. I think, Mr. President, that it would puzzle the powers of logic (and I am well aware that I shall be followed by able logicians in this debate) to prove that a State can commit treason. Against whom can she commit treason? Against the United States? She happens to be one of them; and I take it that it would be rather difficult to show how she could commit treason against herself.

"This amalgamating doctrine is followed out into most singular consequences. Sir, it is said that I do not represent on this floor the State of Virginia, but the United States. Strange hallucination! This I must consider as vital in its consequences. It brings into question the great right of instructions; for, if it be true, the State of Delaware has as full and absolute control over my actions as the State of Virginia. No, sir, I repudiate this doctrine; I owe no responsibility, politically speaking, elsewhere than to my State. And if any Senator from that State should dare oppose her instructions, I might say, with perfect confidence, to quote the remarks of one of her most gifted sons, that 'if he would not be instructed in his seat, he would very soon be instructed out of it.' This doctrine is founded in a gross misconception of the nature and character of our institutions.

"I am bound, as the representative of Virginia, to advance the interests of the whole Union, because, by so doing, I elevate her interests; to do justice to all, because she requires it at my hands; to resist every effort to inflict injury upon any, because I am instructed by her motto, '*Sic semper tyrannis*,' to avoid injustice, and to detest tyranny and oppression; to oppose all laws which are of a dangerous tendency, however small the minority in which I may stand, urged on and encouraged in that course by the moral to be found in that other motto to which she clings, '*Perseverando*.' By pursuing these instructions I fulfill her wishes, and contribute all that in me lies to the advancement of the happiness and prosperity of these United States."

In the course of this speech Mr. Tyler took occasion to say, however:—

"I have not argued these questions with any reference to South Carolina; my own State, every State in the Union, is interested in their decision. I leave South Carolina to

take care of herself; she rests in the hands of her able Senators on this floor. I disclaim the policy adopted by her; all here know that I did not approve of her course. I will not join in the denunciations which have been so loudly thundered against her, nor will I deny that she has much cause of complaint. She has put much at hazard; but I trust we shall have a safe deliverance from our present condition, and that all cause of complaint may speedily be put an end to. I leave her, therefore, where I found her, without, at this time, making farther reference to her."

When the bill came to a final vote, Mr. Tyler was the only one of its opponents who remained in the Senate to maintain his course by his vote; hence his was the only negative vote to the measure authorizing General Jackson to put down nullification by force.

Henry A. Wise, long a friend of Mr. Tyler, and one of his eulogizers, wrote of his position on nullification:—

"Taking sides with nullification was the leading error of Mr. Tyler's life. In this he departed from the true State Rights faith of Virginia, of which Mr. Madison was the exponent, not in going towards the extremes of Federalism, but in following the lead of the South Carolina school of State Rights and remedies on the opposite extreme, equally destructive of all rights and all remedies. Nullification, as promulged and attempted to be enforced by South Carolina, is a very different doctrine or faith from that taught by Mr. Madison and the Virginia Legislature from 1798 to the triumph of the principles of Virginia in 1801. . . . But, as applicable to any class of cases, Mr. Calhoun, in fact, changed, and, as we think, essentially perverted the true doctrine; and this caused it

to be misunderstood and misapplied, until it was brought into disrepute, and was finally overthrown, if not forever destroyed."

It is said that of all the votes Mr. Tyler ever cast, he was never so proud of any as that given alone by him against the coercion of South Carolina, and from this position he never receded. Whether it was a worthy matter of pride or not, the great mass of the people of the United States, and even of the Democratic party, did not think so then, and not only hold it now, but always will hold it, as one of the serious errors of his life.

While this is doubtlessly true, no one can question Mr. Tyler's sincerity, or, perhaps, accuse him of demagogism. He was far removed from everything of this nature in this case. Nothing could better illustrate his devotion to genuine convictions than his position on this whole nullification muddle. It was not the way to popularity, one of his own motive forces. This he very well knew. Even his own State, although opposing the Force Bill, opposed his position on nullification. His reputation for patriotism, especially that kind to which Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Mrs. Madison, Mrs. Polk, and a vast number of others who had a dread even of being thought of as not the children of the whole country, suffered by his position on the side of nullification. His elaborate speech on the Force Bill places him in the worst possible light on this point. By this speech he denies the existence of a country to which he owed anything, beyond his own

State. His patriotism did not even reach his section; and his consideration of the good of the whole Union was from the narrowest possible grounds of selfishness; that is, that by so doing he would elevate the interests of Virginia. A Nation he did not acknowledge, and his position was too openly asserted to allow the idea that he courted popular esteem beyond the "Republic of Virginia."

In the spring of 1833 he was again elected to the United States Senate. In the meantime, too, Mr. Calhoun had resigned the Vice-Presidency, and entered the Senate as the great champion of nullification and slavery, as well as an enemy of Andrew Jackson, an enmity originally based, however, on no error or fault of his own. When Mr. Clay came forward with his modified tariff, as the great Pacifier, Mr. Tyler supported the measure, as, indeed, did Mr. Calhoun, and the spirit of secession was, for a time, allayed. The Bank veto had lifted General Jackson up with the Democracy of the South, but the Force Proclamation had degraded him; and, although John Tyler had mainly supported his Administration, from this time he was counted with the opposition; yet he was so only in opposing most of the measures of General Jackson's Administration, not, strictly speaking, as identifying himself with the Whig party.

By the time of the meeting of Congress in the winter of 1833 General Jackson had taken upon himself another responsibility, that of removing the deposits of the Government from the Bank of the

United States. Mr. Tyler took an active part in the proceedings in Congress started by this new assumption of power on the part of President Jackson.

In speaking on the report of the Finance Committee, of which he was a member, as to the removal of the deposits, Mr. Tyler said :—

“We are continually told of the necessity of preserving the Republican party. Such, sir, has been my constant effort since I have been in public life. I regard its preservation as connected with the preservation of the Union and of liberty. To its principles I have continued to cling with all my soul and all my strength. But I will tell the Senate and the country to what Republican party I do belong ; to that which brought Mr. Jefferson into power ; which rests upon the federative principle ; which rebukes every assumption of authority not warranted by the Constitution, which proclaims the inviolability of law, and the strict observance of public faith. To this party I do belong, not to that nondescript, patchwork, mosaic party which meets in conventions and calls itself *the Republican party*. Not to that party which changes its principles as the chameleon its color, with every cloud or ray which proceeds from the Presidential orb ; which is one thing to-day, another to-morrow, and the third day whatever chance may make it ; nor to *the Republican party* which plays off names against men, calling one the father of the American system, for the purpose of affecting him in a particular quarter, and yet goes in advance of him upon that very system ; denounces the tariff, and yet votes for and sustains the tariff of 1828—that bill of abominations ; not that Republican party which denounces the Bank and upholds the proclamation ; which denounces the Bank and sustains the Force Bill ; which denounces the Bank, and even now sustains the President in his assumption of

power conferred neither by the laws nor Constitution. No, sir, I belong not to that 'Republican party.' Its work is that of President-making. Even now it is in motion. Before the President is scarcely warm in his seat, not yielding to what decency would seem to require, not even permitting one short year to elapse, that party is in full march, calling conventions, organizing committees, and seeking by all manner of means, at this early day, to commit the people. But I will tell them, Mr. President, in the language of Holy Writ, that 'the race is not to the swift.' They are too much in advance of that question. The people will demand some short breathing-time; and when the proper time arrives for them to act, I trust, sir, that they will look only to high considerations, in selecting an agent to fill the highest office in the world, because conferred by a free and intelligent people. I hope that they will select the individual most capable of advancing the public good, whether he be the favorite of this or that man who may be high in office. With that business I have nothing to do. I hope the country will have nothing to do with it until the vital questions which now engage us shall be settled on a proper basis. And, sir, I, as one of that people, express it as my opinion that, unless those questions be properly settled, we may talk of a Constitution, but we shall have it not; we may boast of our laws, but they will be impotent and feeble; we may sing of liberty, but it will be the song of the bird in the cage."

Mr. Tyler was strengthened in his actions at this point by the course of his State. From different parts of the State memorials were sent up to him in vigorous terms, disapproving the conduct of President Jackson in removing the money of the Government from the Bank, and by a stretch of authority that was denied to the Executive in Virginia.

Mr. Tyler now voted for the resolutions censuring General Jackson for his course, and in doing this acted in harmony with the desire of the larger portion of his constituency. At this time Mr. Tyler became acquainted with the "Senator for Thirty Years;" and although Mr. Benton, in his stupendous personal vanity, it is quite probable, considered Tyler beneath his metal, he acquired an ill-feeling towards him which he never relinquished, and which may, to some extent, appear hereafter.

Near the close of this session Mr. Tyler was made President of the Senate temporarily, and on taking the chair said:—

"SENATORS,—In calling upon me unexpectedly to preside over your deliberations, you have conferred on me a testimonial of your respect and confidence upon which I place the highest value. I accept it with gratitude, and shall fondly cherish its recollection. You are the representatives of sovereign States, deputed by them to uphold and maintain their rights and interests. Unlike the Roman Senate, so much the vaunt of ancient story, you owe your elevation to the high seats you occupy to no adventitious circumstances of birth or fortune, but to the ennobling traits of intellect and virtue. And what citizens of any one of these States can fail to be proud of you? Who can reflect without high satisfaction on the daily display of intellectual vigor constantly manifested in the debates which here occur? Party contests may divide and sever; those contests constitute the organic principle of free States. You may severally, in your turn, have become the objects of attack and denunciation before the public; but there is not, and can not be, an American who does not turn his eyes to the Senate of the United States as to

the great conservative body of our Federal system, and to this chamber as the ark in which the covenant is deposited. To have received, therefore, at your hands this station furnishes to me abundant cause for self-gratulation. This feeling is not diminished by the fact that but few hours now remain of this session, and that I shall probably be called upon to render but little active service in this place. Upon this circumstance I congratulate both you and myself; for, although I have for the greater portion of twenty years been connected with legislative bodies, this is the first time I have ever been called on to preside over the deliberations of any; and I have only sought so far to make myself acquainted with the rules of parliamentary proceedings as to avoid any flagrant violation of them in my personal conduct. For the short period which will now elapse prior to your adjournment, I claim, and shall doubtless receive at your hands, a liberal indulgence for any defects I may exhibit, or any errors into which I may fall."

In February, 1836, the Legislature of Virginia passed a resolution instructing her Senators to vote for expunging the resolution of March, 1834, censuring President Jackson. The other Senator from that State was Benjamin Watkins Leigh, an opponent of the Administration, and an able and upright man. Leigh wrote a letter of great earnestness and strength to the Legislature, refusing to obey the instructions; and he also declined to resign, although he did sometime afterwards resign. But Mr. Tyler, having more emphatically and fully committed himself to the doctrine of instructions, determined, after consulting his friends, to resign. Accordingly he sent his resignation to the Vice-President; and soon

afterwards, having notified the Legislature of his State to that effect, withdrew from a position in which he had rapidly risen to public notice. In his letter to the Legislature of Virginia Mr. Tyler reviewed the whole doctrine of instructions, giving the grounds for his action in the case, and also set forth the motives and course of his conduct throughout his service in Congress.

CHAPTER V.

MR. TYLER'S POLITICAL STANDING—HIS APPEARANCE IN
THE RACE OF 1836—NOMINATED FOR THE
VICE-PRESIDENCY IN 1839.

SINCE 1830, Mr. Tyler had resided in Gloucester County, but he now located in Williamsburg, the old colonial capital, and resumed the practice of his profession. And although he gave his attention for a time to his own affairs, he had been too long in politics and public place to be quite at ease, and he had really reached so much consequence in the State that retirement was not possible, as it certainly could not have been desirable to him. On his return to Gloucester from a somewhat unique Congressional experience he had been received with unusual consideration and greatly praised and eulogized for his devotion to principle, and the vigor with which he had represented his State. He had, indeed, made a history, one about which there still remains no little diversity of opinion. Starting out a Democrat of the State-Rights persuasion, he had, by force of circumstances, become associated with the Whigs, who consisted of National Republicans, old wandering and solitary Federalists, and an incorporation of all opposition elements under the Administration of General Jackson.

Mr. Tyler, from the outset, had been opposed to a bank under the patronage of the Government, and when he resigned his seat in the Senate his views were still unchanged on that point. But he did not approve General Jackson's method of doing away with the Bank. He opposed the removal of the deposits from the Bank, and was in favor of restoring them after they had been removed; and believed the Bank should be employed as the legal agent of the Government until a better be supplied and provision made for the winding up of its affairs in a manner to render the change of the least possible moment to the business interests of the country. He had not become a friend to the Bank, but he was a friend to law, and was willing to seek for the most feasible and satisfactory way of adjusting the financial difficulties of the Republic. He believed more in the giant, reason, than a giant arm in regulating the affairs of the country. To oppose General Jackson in one thing was to oppose him in all things. Principles first, and then personal feeling and circumstances, had made Mr. Tyler a general opponent of the Administration. As an anti-Nationalist, a State Rights man, he had felt and argued strongly for South Carolina without approving the course she had taken; and he had stood alone at the last moment against the Force Bill. He opposed all the views and acts of the President as to the course of South Carolina, and staked his own conduct on the belief that the President represented the minor sovereignty, one that had no power of coercion. Mr. Tyler's

general course as to the Administration placed him very decidedly in the opposition, and the general bearing of the practical portion of his principles gave him position among the Whigs. Indeed he was claimed by the Virginia Whigs, and was held throughout the country to be a moderate Whig of what then constituted a small Southern State-Rights element of the party. Knowing that he lacked some of the traits of a genuine Whig, the party as a whole was willing to accept Mr. Tyler, while there were certainly little or no grounds for believing that he would as a matter of accommodation desert the peculiar line of views he had maintained. His advocacy of some Whig measures and opposition to General Jackson served to classify him, and by his bold and singular course, at the close of his Congressional service in 1836, he found himself with a national reputation. His resignation presented him in an uncommon attitude, and his opposition to the Force Bill and general anti-national sentiments gave him strength and favor in his section, and his integrity had not been shaken by his public conduct. The Democratic Legislature desired him to vote for the "expunging" act, and his resigning in preference to obeying instructions which he believed the Legislature had the right and authority to give, brought upon him the extravagant praises of the Virginia Whigs. Senator Leigh had resisted the Legislature and Mr. Tyler had resigned, and yet the dissimilar courses had made two Whig heroes.

Among Mr. Tyler's great and compensatory virtues

the Whigs put his admiration for Henry Clay. But the main prop in this admiration was to be found in the part Mr. Clay took in the compromise temporarily pacifying the nullifiers in 1832. For this performance alone he thought Mr. Clay deserved a monument and an eternal place in the memory of his countrymen, an opinion which not all the admirers of Mr. Clay shared with perfect cordiality.

As the period of "good-will," the political "golden age," wore away and the Federalists began to find new living issues for them to handle they showed a disposition to seek a new name as better suited to the time. They had always been Nationalists, a trait that the Republicans (Democrats) did not maintain at all times, being rather constructionists on the side of the States. Hence the Federalists with the new co-workers who came to them were called National Republicans. But this, too, was an impracticable name, and so they, with those who joined them in the opposition to General Jackson and the new Democracy, became Whigs. But further additions were temporarily made to the Whigs of a section from the Southern State-Rights and other factions. Mr. Tyler's small faction of the anti-Jackson element claimed that the Whigs constituted a new party with little or none of the traits which had distinguished the old Federalists; or that if anything predominated with the opposition, it was their own stupid dogma of State Rights or State Sovereignty. Although the Whig party was always vague enough in many articles of its faith, and was willing to have

accessions from any source, in point of fact the State Rights element had merely been driven for a time into its ranks. From 1832 to 1840, the National Republicans or Whigs were not in a mood to trifle with men who swelled their numbers, or to stand on strict constructions of private opinions. Under these circumstances, it was natural enough for Mr. Tyler to stand among the Whigs. He had started out a Democrat of a certain type, and he always was really a State-Rights Democrat in the Southern sense of the term Democrat. Still the name Whig must have been really agreeable to Mr. Tyler, in spite of the national character of the party. Practically Democracy (democracy) has always been different in the North and the South. On one side of the color line it has meant the way to rule, to power simply; on the other it has been a road to life. But however all these things were, Mr. Tyler was at this time a Whig, to the Northern Whigs a Whig expedient, and his good fortune was by no means at an end.

The opponents of General Jackson were divided and uncertain about their chances and the course to be pursued in 1836. The General had arranged for transferring his cloak to Mr. Van Buren, and continuing his Administration in a regular succession. And his opponents really had no hope or expectation of thwarting his will in 1836. The hopeless prospect before them rendered them indifferent as to some of the great conditions of success. The opposition was composed of elements too diverse to be united. Even with perfect union there was at best

no chance for their defeat of Mr. Van Buren. But the Democrats were not themselves harmonious by any means. It was hard for the South to accept Mr. Van Buren. In October, 1835, Tennessee actually nominated Hugh L. White for the Presidency; and in the winter following the Legislature of Alabama took the same step. On the 29th of December, 1835, the Whigs of Maryland, in convention in Baltimore, nominated Harrison and Tyler; and Virginia soon afterwards substituted Tyler for Granger on the ticket with General Harrison. In December the Pennsylvania Democratic Anti-Masons, in convention at Harrisburg, nominated Harrison and Granger. The regular Jacksonian Democrats had, in their convention in May, put Richard M. Johnson on their ticket with Mr. Van Buren, but had failed to produce party harmony by so doing. A few of the Southern newspapers now proposed Henry Clay and John Tyler as a compromise ticket, and some of them recommended Mr. Tyler for the race with Judge White. Early in 1836 Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia had named him for the Vice-Presidency on what they termed the State-Rights ticket with White. Some efforts were made in Ohio, and other places, to put Mr. Tyler on the ticket with General Harrison, but Mr. Granger had in his favor the Anti-Masonic element. With this hopeless arrangement for the opposition the race began.

The White and Tyler ticket was not supported to any great extent at the North. Although it was

organized as a part of the opposition to General Jackson, or Mr. Van Buren, it was Democratic, and was supported by original Jackson men adhering mainly to Madisonian principles, and opposed to the excesses of the Jacksonian Administration. The extreme State-Rights men of the South gave their support to this ticket. Mr. White had been a warm supporter of General Jackson, and thought he ought to succeed him in the President's Chair. He had wider national views than Mr. Tyler at that time, and was really not the State-Rights factor in his ticket.

The election was not eventful nor exciting, and nobody was more surprised than the Whigs at the extent of their own success. South Carolina gave her eleven votes to Mr. Tyler, while she voted for W. P. Mangum for President. Maryland voted for Harrison and Tyler; and Tennessee and Georgia gave their electoral votes to White and Tyler. Thus Mr. Tyler had forty-seven electoral votes for the Vice-Presidency. The choice of Vice-President was left to the Senate, Mr. Tyler having the smallest number of votes being omitted. Here South Carolina did not participate, as she would not vote for the Anti-Masonic Whig, Mr. Granger, and Colonel Johnson was repugnant to her. Virginia had also thrown away her votes for the Vice-Presidency in giving them to William Smith, of Alabama. South Carolina had never yet held a popular election, her electors being chosen by the Legislature. She did not adopt the republican forms of other States until

after the Rebellion, her people voting the first time for Presidential electors in 1868.

In the spring of 1838, Mr. Tyler was elected to the Legislature from James City County, and was then thoroughly identified with the mixture of various elements then found in Virginia in opposition to the Administration at Washington. Although that State had voted for Mr. Van Buren, and he still had some faithful adherents among the Virginians, the time had long passed when the South could quietly rely upon a leader from Mr. Van Buren's section of the Union. Van Buren was not only a Northern Democrat, but he was a political magician. To him were accredited the evils that then were occurring, and also many of those of General Jackson's times. Everybody knew that the General's will was an absolute despotism, and yet it was well understood that at times he gave himself to his favorites. In these moments it was held that the cunning little man led him into ways that were dark. Thus was Mr. Van Buren made to bear the burdens of his strong patron, who was ever ready to assume the responsibility of his own conduct, and that of his friends, at whatever odds against him.

No part of the Nation was in a greater political turmoil at this time than Virginia. A Senator to Congress was to be chosen in the winter of 1838, and William C. Rives, who was filling out Mr. Tyler's unexpired term, was a candidate for re-election. He was an excellent man; but, as he was supposed to be in the interest of Mr. Van

Buren, the greater part of the multiformed Whig opposition was against him. This was, at all events, the outward state of the case. John Y. Mason was the choice of the straight Democrats. The Whigs put forward Mr. Tyler, and Rives was introduced as a conservative or compromise candidate. The Whigs gradually went over to Mr. Rives; but the session closed without an election, after a strong, long, and bitter contest. It was a strange fight, and it was fairly concluded that there was some outside influence from the Whig party at large in favor of Mr. Rives. Mr. Tyler and his friends were hot. There was some evil scheming to kill Mr. Tyler. So it was said. But what did the Whigs owe to Mr. Tyler? He was really only a Whig in the sense of an opponent to the Jackson-Van Buren Administration, as many others were Whigs. He was a radical State-Rights man, perhaps without national traits, and a bitter opponent of internal improvements by the Government. He was opposed to protection, and was really no friend to the Bank of the United States. These things were well known. In his last year in the Senate he did aid in fixing up the affairs of the Bank, so as to give it a fair opportunity to settle its wide-spread interests to the best advantage to the country, according to the view of the Whigs. He was willing to give it fair play. He had not made himself obnoxious when the abolition and anti-slavery flood set in in 1835, and was willing to preserve the right of petition. He was chairman of the Committee on the

District of Columbia, and knew the petitions would rest quietly there forever. He was in the opposition to the Administration. Of that the Whigs were certain. There was, no doubt, a lurking feeling on the part of the Whigs that Tyler, a man of ardent, impetuous feelings, could, by preferment, be turned into the channel they desired. But they underestimated some of his other qualities. For the present it was enough to know that he could be relied upon in the Senate as a part of the opposition to the Administration. That has always been deemed a great political virtue, and worthy of especial commendation or preferment by the benefited party. It was also believed by some of the Whigs that Mr. Rives would finally come into their ranks; and, if so, his qualities were of a more reliable kind than Mr. Tyler's. At any rate, agents were sent to Richmond to secure his election. This is the testimony of the singular Henry A. Wise, and there is no need to doubt it.

But it appears that the Whigs only preferred Rives to Mr. Tyler instead of an unknown "dark horse," providing Tyler could not be elected. With them it was only a question of carrying Virginia into the opposition at the next Presidential election, and they were anxious to fall upon the best means, no matter what, for that purpose.

At this time Mr. Clay expressed his preference decidedly for the election of Mr. Tyler to the Senate, if that would best secure the Whig interests in Virginia; and even went so far as to suggest that

he might be put on the Whig ticket for the Vice-Presidency.

Mr. Wise also states that with the mutual understanding between the friends of Tyler in Virginia and the Whig leaders outside that Mr. Tyler should be Vice-President, his supporters stepped aside, and Mr. Rives was elected. But, perhaps, this view should be taken with some grains of allowance, as the Whig Convention at Baltimore had done its work, nominated Mr. Tyler before Virginia finally elected the United States Senator. Still the Baltimore Convention had really settled the question as to the election of a Senator in the Virginia Legislature, and that the election took place after the nomination of Mr. Tyler for the Vice-Presidency could not necessarily go to prove that there had not been some steps toward the best possible arrangement in Virginia. That Mr. Tyler was privy to any kind of bargain does not appear probable. Such a bargain was not necessary on his part. That his Virginia supporters fell in with the course the Whig party was plating out was natural enough, when it was in the way to the furtherance of his good fortune. That is all there was in the case, and as the Whig party then had gathered into it all the strange and incongruous elements, Mr. Tyler was able to take the course which seemed to lead to the best results without at all injuring his self-respect or conflicting seriously with his principles. Save as to the Force Bill and a few other matters, Mr. Tyler's course in Congress in opposition to the Administration was satisfactory

to the Whigs; at all events it had put him on quite favorable terms with the Whig party, properly speaking. To the Whig organization in his own State, made up as it was of Whigs, original Jackson Democrats, State-Rights, and other factions against the Administration, Mr. Tyler was fully committed.

The Whigs were now using every means in their power to secure the next election. Although Mr. Clay said that "he would rather be right than be President," he did greatly desire to be President. No means were left unused. It was soon discovered that Judge H. L. White would not be a candidate. And Mr. Clay sought his aid. Henry A. Wise says that he was sent to Judge White to say to him: "Mr. Clay and Mr. Bell requested me to ask, Will you please stand out of Mr. Clay's way, and give him your influence for the Presidency?"

And Judge White was numbered with the opposition, although he was an old-school Republican Democrat. He had a very kind feeling towards many of the opposition leaders prominent as Presidential candidates, and, perhaps, preferred Mr. Clay to any probable candidate against Mr. Van Buren, although he did not, from the first, believe that Mr. Clay would at that time be nominated, but that General Harrison would be. Nor was Judge White averse to being called a Whig, as that term was to include in the approaching race every possible shade of Federalists and Democrats. Four years before, he had, in fact, been called a Southern Whig. The

alliance was to be the opposition, and the great cry was to be, Down with a corrupt Administration!

On the 4th of December, 1839, the Whig Convention met at Harrisburg, and Mr. Tyler was one of the delegates sent from Virginia. A caucus of prominent Whigs had the year before, in Washington City, decided as to the time and place of holding this convention. As many delegates were apportioned to each State as it had members in both Houses of Congress, and twenty-two States were represented. Isaac C. Bates, of Massachusetts, was temporary chairman, and, after a short session, the convention adjourned. On the following day the permanent organization was effected, with James Barbour, of Virginia, as chairman. On the 6th General Harrison was nominated, and on the next day Mr. Tyler was unanimously chosen for the Vice-Presidency, Virginia only withholding her vote at his request.

The Democratic National Convention met at Baltimore on the 5th of May, 1840, and Mr. Van Buren was unanimously renominated for the Presidency. The choice of a Vice-Presidential candidate was left to the States, and Colonel Johnson was accepted with some degree of unanimity. The Abolitionists also put forward a ticket in this race.

In the following letter Mr. Tyler formally accepted the nomination :—

“WILLIAMSBURG, VA., December 16, 1839.

“GENTLEMEN,—The nomination which, as the organs of the late Harrisburg Convention, you have communicated to me, is accepted with a sensibility greatly augmented by

the fact that, while it is a result in no way contemplated by me, it was attended by the unanimous concurrence of that enlightened and patriotic body. To have my name associated with that of the eminent patriot who is put in nomination for the first office, is of itself regarded by me as no ordinary honor. His long and faithful services to the country at the council board and in the field have won for him a distinguished name in history, and furnished the surest guarantee that, should he be elevated by the popular voice to the chief executive office, his administration of governmental affairs will be just and prudent and wise. With the Constitution for his guide, and the good of his country his only aim, I doubt not that his exertions would be exclusively directed to uphold the one and to advance the other. The friend and supporter of Jefferson, of Madison, and Monroe, and the immediate descendant of a signer of the Declaration of Independence, can be none other than true to his early Republican creed, and the devoted advocate of free principles and of popular rights.

"I have the honor to be, gentlemen, your obedient
servant,

JOHN TYLER.

"JOHN OWENS, Esq., and others of the Committee."

CHAPTER VI.

"TIPPECANOE AND TYLER TOO"—THE LOG-CABIN CAMPAIGN—THE ELECTION—DEATH IN THE WHITE HOUSE—MR. TYLER BECOMES PRESIDENT.

IN this letter Mr. Tyler says nothing of himself, opens no question, avoids all kinds of commitment, and contents himself wisely with a panegyric of General Harrison. The Whigs had, indeed, fallen into strange hands, and all for expediency's sake, a precaution hardly necessary at a time when the country was ripe for a change. General Harrison was himself, an old Jefferson Democrat, a follower of Mr. Jefferson at Cincinnati, when there were only three other men who supported him in 1800; and Mr. Tyler, extreme pro-slavery, State-Rights, anti to almost every item in the Whig schedule, except opposition to the existing Administration of public affairs.

No man was more disappointed over the choice of the convention for the Presidency than was Henry Clay. He was angry and offended, and not without reason. Such an opportunity he never had had, and never would have again. He believed that any nominee of the Whigs at Harrisburg would be successful this time, and deplored a hard fate which he believed his friends should have avoided. When

Mr. Clay heard the result at his rooms in Washington, in a fit of rage and disappointment he exclaimed in the presence of Henry A. Wise, that "if there were two Henry Clays one of them would make the other President of the United States."

Many of Mr. Clay's friends were not true to him. That is unquestionable. How much Mr. Webster's supporters had to do with this, Clay never knew, perhaps. The main intrigue against him was in New York, and the influence of this was felt in other States in the appointing of delegates to the nominating convention. Mr. Webster's friends did, possibly, hope to nominate him by bringing in General Scott to divide the vote with Mr. Clay. Strong Clay districts of New York were made to send delegates unfavorable to Mr. Clay, by a singular system of deception, while pretending to be in his favor. Some of the middle-ground men, *Démocrats* who were not in the ranks of Mr. Van Buren, and were hardly to be counted with the opposition, saw the machinations against Mr. Clay, and believed he would be defeated. But he had trusted his affairs in the hands of his friends, and could not, or would not, believe that they would deceive him. But many of them did not share with him the idea that anybody could beat Mr. Van Buren at that time. While greatly attached to Mr. Clay, they were determined to take the road to success. Expediency and availability were the main things to be considered. Now was the Whig opportunity. Mr. Clay could still wait. This was the whole burden of the offense

against Mr. Clay. Even Horace Greeley was against him, the man, above all others, he wanted to be President. Thurlow Weed and Greeley were at Harrisburg doing all they could for the nomination of General Harrison, whom they did not compare with Mr. Clay in point of ability or of deserving at the hands of the Whig party. But the contest of 1836 had surprised the Whigs. The vote for their candidate and the White ticket was beyond all expectation. The opposition would be unbroken this time, not mentioning the small Abolition organization. Harrison seemed to have in him the elements of strength or success which they needed. The year 1836 showed that, if it did not also show that Mr. Van Buren was wanting in them.

Those delegates who held most firmly to Mr. Clay were from States that were at best doubtful, or that could not be carried for the Whig ticket in any event. Some of the States with large electoral votes, which were in doubt on Mr. Clay, felt that with General Harrison the doubt would be removed. And so it was that, after a long and hard preliminary struggle, Harrison was chosen on the first ballot, and Mr. Tyler was unanimously nominated for the Vice-Presidency. It was held by some that the selection of Mr. Tyler was meant to appease and reconcile the extreme or uncompromising friends of Mr. Clay, but this was a mistake. Because it was claimed that Mr. Tyler had been observed to shed tears on seeing the defeat of Mr. Clay, it was believed that placing him second on the ticket would

bring peace to this class of Mr. Clay's supporters. The story of the crying of Mr. Tyler might have operated, to some extent, admirably, but it was, perhaps, an error in fact. The assertion that Mr. Tyler did shed the tears is quite common among political writers, and, in all probability, the story was current at the close of the convention; but the truth of it is doubtful.

General Solomon Van Rensselaer, a leading delegate from New York, in writing of the matter sometime subsequently, claimed that when the work of nominating the Presidential candidate was at an end, he was told to name the other candidate, and the business would be settled. He gave three candidates, one of whom was Mr. Tyler. But as the three could not be taken, he was requested to choose, and named Mr. Tyler. But before many months the General found himself praying for forgiveness for the fatal mistake he had made, as he held, in bringing about the nomination of John Tyler. While his letter would appear to be authority for the story of the tears, it more probably sprang from the fictitious air by which he was surrounded. When Mr. Tyler was directly questioned on this point several years later he treated it as the lightest of all the misstatements about himself. Even if the story had been true, there was no crime in shedding tears over the defeat of Henry Clay. Other persons did the same thing, no doubt, with great honor and credit to themselves. If Mr. Tyler's tears secured his nomination for the Vice-Presidency, they were about

as effective as were ever shed by a politician. But the assertion that they did so is not well considered.

On most subjects Mr. Tyler's opinions had been notably at variance with Mr. Clay's; and only in his last years in Congress did he side with Clay in opposing the Administration of General Jackson in most of its measures. Nor is there much evidence of his being personally a great admirer of Mr. Clay. But however all this may have been, the nomination of Mr. Tyler must be traced mainly to other causes. He never had been a Whig, never had exhibited Whig principles on many leading issues; that everybody knew who knew anything about the matter. Then, what was the real foundation for the action of the Harrisburg Convention in nominating him, beyond the mere matter of accident indicated in the letter of Van Rensselaer? It was that the Whig ticket might receive the benefits in the South to be derived, as was supposed, from association with a State-Rights, strict constructionist. This arrangement would cement the elements of the opposition in that section. This was, perhaps, understood after the failure to elect a Senator in Virginia the winter before. Expediency had been the guide in nominating General Harrison, and expediency or policy was at the bottom of Mr. Tyler's nomination, although that was not necessary. John Bell would have done as well, and future risks would have been avoided. Bell was a Southern Federal Whig, Mr. Tyler was not. Mr. Tyler would be all the Whigs needed, all they wanted him to be,

and his nomination would help them into power. So the campaign began, and the many-sided Whig tornado swept the land.

The Whigs did not fail to display their principles, and especially their good intentions. There was no shrinking, perhaps, from the points of contest anywhere, but noise was by far the greatest ingredient of the wonderful contest. Mr. Tyler was called to express his opinions in all kinds of directions. No person knew better than the Democrats, of the Van Buren ticket, what Mr. Tyler's opinions were, and it was now hoped to divide the Whig party by a full expression of them before the country. It does not at all appear that he showed any disposition to avoid the responsibility of the position he held. He did not consider himself a Whig, and knew well the grounds of his selection. But he desired to deal fairly with the great multiformed opposition party; and did not consider amicably the effort even of Whigs to draw him into controversy, when his opinions were well known, and would not harmonize the party, especially as to a bank, on which the genuine Whigs were, to a great extent, intent. A Democratic meeting at Pittsburgh called on him for an unequivocal answer to the question of his giving his sanction in any emergency to a charter for a bank. This he answered in full, reiterating his belief in the unconstitutionality of such an institution, and simply saying that he never could give his sanction to such a measure, unless the Constitution should be amended. His reply was sent by him to the Whig

leaders in Washington, and they determined not to publish it. It was impolitic, and the Democrats of Pittsburgh went unanswered. The Whig leaders could not then trust Mr. Tyler's opinions abroad. They had no notion then, nor from the first, that he would be called upon to decide, in the Presidential Chair, any of these great questions. Nor did he think so himself. To preside in the Senate, and give his casting vote perchance in favor of the Southern element of the opposition, was all his friends expected. More than that was set down to his good fortune. The following letter, in reply to citizens of Henrico County, Virginia, from Mr. Tyler, was published during the campaign, and covers the main points at stake, as did other statements from him on several proper occasions, as in a letter of October 5th, to citizens of Steubenville, Ohio:—

“WILLIAMSBURG, October 16, 1840.

“GENTLEMEN,—Your letter, bearing date the 3d of October, which seems to have been written with full knowledge that I was absent from Virginia, was received by me within a few hours after my reaching home from a protracted absence, commencing before its date, and terminating with this day. If it has been published, as I am led to suppose it has been, from the statement in your letter of your intention to publish it, I have not, up to this moment, seen the newspaper which contains it. This will readily explain to you the reason that it has not earlier been answered.

“Judging from the references which you have been pleased to make to a speech delivered by me before the Tippecanoe Club of Washington City, on my late journey to Ohio, I am led to suppose that I should not have been

honored by your correspondence if in that address I had not ventured to predict, with some degree of confidence (a confidence which recent events have not been calculated to impair), that William Henry Harrison was destined to supplant Martin Van Buren in the Presidential office. But to whatever cause I may have been indebted for the honor, I am thankful to you for the assurance which you give me, that you have addressed me from no desire 'to break in upon my halcyon repose, or in any way to disquiet or annoy me.' I beg to assure you that you have done neither the one nor the other. My fear, however, is that I have been guilty of a similar offense towards you, by my speech at Washington; for, although I had remained at home during the whole year, up to a late day in September, within a short distance of your own residence; and although, from your admitted intelligence, you must have weighed the 'possible' contingency of my succession to the Presidency, for the reason which you assign, earlier than the day on which your letter bears date, yet you had not deemed it necessary to question me on any point whatever. Be that as it may, I doubt not that it will be a source of infinite gratification to you to be informed, and I give you the information on knowledge obtained by myself during my recent visit to Ohio, that General Harrison, who is now in his sixty-eighth year, enjoys a robust and vigorous constitution; that he has visited the most of the State in which he resides during the last few months, traveling by night and by day, and delivering speeches to large assemblages of his fellow-citizens; that his health is perfect, and that the prospect of a continuance of his life for four years to come is as great as that which appertains to me or yourselves. I shall also be permitted to assure you that you are mistaken in supposing that his political views and opinions are either reluctantly given, or are confined 'to his relations and partisans.' On the contrary, many come to hear

his addresses with opinions unfavorable to him, and go away his warm and decided supporters. He candidly and frankly gives utterance to his opinions; and, in proof of this, I take leave to refer you, with some emphasis, to his speeches at Columbus, Fort Meigs, Carthage, and Dayton. You will find them in any Whig newspaper, although I do not remember to have seen them in any Administration print.

“Before I proceed to answer your inquiry, I shall be pardoned for saying that I am so far uninformed of the name of the gentleman whom the Administration party in Virginia and the South propose to sustain for the Vice-Presidency in opposition to myself—and for the suggestion to you, that in order to decide upon my claims to that distinction, which I readily admit are of no great weight, whether it would not have been proper to have obtained the name of the rival candidate, and to have propounded to him the same questions which you have propounded to me. By a comparison of opinions between us would you not have been better prepared to decide how to cast your suffrages on the 2d of November next? And I submit it to you in all fairness whether, when my opponents are running a blank ticket against me, without any designated rival, it is altogether proper to put me in the witness’ stand and subject me to a rigid cross-examination? This can only be justified upon the ground that you are firmly of opinion that Mr. Van Buren can not die, although in his sixty-second year, for four years to come, and that General Harrison must inevitably do so. If there was an indemnity from death to all who had not attained their sixty-seventh year, while a decree had been pronounced by the Creator that all who had attained that age should die before the lapse of four years, I could well imagine that your desire ‘to preserve our liberty and happiness’ might lead you to propound interrogatories to me, and to take no concern as to the opinions and views of the person

who was destined, at some time or other, to be placed on the ticket with Mr. Van Buren. But no such decree has gone forth; and the fact that a citizen has attained his sixty-seventh year now excites apprehensions with you which were never displayed before. In 1832 General Jackson, then in his sixty-eighth year, was re-elected to the Presidency without any of the gloomy forebodings of his demise which are now said to exist as to General Harrison, and I am yet to learn that he was either more robust or active than General Harrison now is.

"Hoping to be pardoned for the freedom of my suggestions, which the style and manner of your letter have given rise to, I will now proceed, with as much brevity as I can, to answer your numerous inquiries.

"1. To your first inquiry I answer, that it is not only the right, but the duty of the people, or any portion of them, to make themselves acquainted with the opinions and sentiments of those who either represent them, or are candidates for their suffrages, 'as to the character of the Government, the powers it may Constitutionally exert, and the measures and policy it ought to pursue.' But I must, with equal candor, declare to you, that if any portion of the people, from no real purpose of obtaining information, but actuated by the sole desire of making political capital for his adversary (they themselves having resolved to vote against him, no matter what responses he may give), shall propound questions to a candidate for office, they are guilty of perverting the true object of inquiry; and that, in such a case, the candidate is at liberty to answer or not, as to him may seem best. It is a game of trap which is designed by the interrogators, and it is for him to decide whether they shall play it successfully or not.

"2. To your second inquiry I answer, that the right and duty of the people to propound interrogatories necessarily implies an obligation on the part of the candidate to answer. And for answer to the second part of your

inquiry, as to the obligation of the representative to obey the wishes of his constituents, I refer you for my opinion to my votes given in the House of Delegates of this State in the session of 1812-13, to my speech delivered in the House of Representatives, in the session of 1816-17, on the Compensation Law, and to my letter to the General Assembly of Virginia upon my resigning my seat in the Senate of the United States, under the Expunging Resolutions, a proceeding altogether too recent and too prominent for you to have forgotten.

"3. This inquiry, you must permit me to say, is somewhat a singular one. It neither has relation to my opinions of the character of the Government, the powers it may constitutionally exert, or the measures and policy it ought to pursue. It requires me to enter into a review of the conduct of another, and to tell you whether the same has, among other things, been compatible with good manners. Now that is a task which I must decline; for I would not be willingly set up as an exclusive judge of what is or what is not good manners, which you are aware is altogether a matter of taste, and *de gustibus non est disputandum* is an axiom entirely too old to be shaken, much less overthrown, by an opinion of mine. If you had desired me to make good my declaration, that 'through all the changes of his public life,' General Harrison had followed the precepts of General Washington, I would promptly have done so. One of the leading precepts of that great man—a precept evermore enforced by his example—was, that it was the duty of a good citizen to devote all his energies of mind and body to his country, and to peril his life, if needs be, in her cause; and history fully attests that such has been the uniform course of General Harrison from the early age of nineteen. The history of the North-west is his history, and the declaration made by Mr. Madison, that 'no man had rendered more important services to his country, and had been so

ilily rewarded,' is fully sustained by facts which can not deceive us.

"But you say that General Harrison refused, in the first instance, to answer inquiries, and then that he answered them to connections and partisans only. You do not deny but that since, and in due time for all men properly to have judged of his pretensions, he has answered. The utmost extent of his offense, then, according to your own view of it, has been, that he has not answered as promptly as you could have desired, but just as soon as he himself thought it was necessary, and fully in time to place you and his countrymen in possession of all his views, in order that you might decide on his fitness for the Presidential office. But my information is every way different from yours. I know that his opinions on every subject on which he has been interrogated, of any importance, have been given long before the present canvass commenced. His address to the people of the Cincinnati District, in 1822, disclosed fully his opinions 'as to the character of the Government, and the powers it might Constitutionally exert,' while his Vincennes speech, and his letter to Judge Berrien, published four years ago, are full and explicit on the subject of abolition. What more could any inquirer after truth have desired than a direct reference to these expressions of opinion? But this did not content his opponents. They deemed it of importance to their party to appear not to be satisfied, and therefore the charge of his being 'in the hands of a committee,' and the 'caged candidate.' How utterly unfounded this charge was, has been fully demonstrated to the whole world.

"4. I have cause to thank you for ascribing to me a kind feeling toward the people of the District of Columbia, although you do me too much honor in supposing it to be parental. I certainly do take an interest in their welfare, although I never aspired to be regarded by them in the light of a parent; and if I did not tell them 'whether I

would interpose to save them from the oft-attempted invasion of the fanatical Abolitionists,' it was because I had good reason to believe that they knew full well my sentiments on that subject. My recorded votes in the United States Senate, and my opinions spread before the country through the medium of the public press, apart from their knowledge of the fact that I was a resident citizen of the State of Virginia, left me nothing to explain to them on that head. I have now, in answer to your inquiry, to quote and to adopt the opinion of General Harrison, as expressed in his letter to Judge Berrien, of Georgia, dated 30th of September, 1836, in the following words: 'I do not think that Congress can abolish slavery in the District of Columbia without the consent of the States of Virginia and Maryland and the people of the District. It would be a breach of faith toward the States I have mentioned, who would certainly not have made the cession, if they had supposed that it would ever be used for a purpose so different from that which was its object, and so injurious to them as a free colored population in the midst of their slave population of the same description. Nor do I believe that Congress could deprive the people of the District of Columbia of their property without their consent. It would be to revive the doctrine of the Tories of Great Britain in relation to the powers of Parliament before the Revolutionary War, and in direct hostility to the principles advanced by Lord Chatham, "that what was a man's own was exclusively and absolutely his own, and could not be taken from him without his own consent, or that of his legal representative."'

"Whether I would veto a bill violatory of these opinions, so plainly expressed, if seated in the Presidential chair—a station which I neither aspire to in the future, nor expect to devolve on me in any other way—it would seem to be the merest work of supererogation to answer. You would not doubt my course any more than you have

cause to doubt the course of General Harrison, under the circumstances supposed.

"5. In reply to the first branch of your inquiry, I quote and adopt the language of General Harrison in his speech delivered at Dayton: 'There is not in the Constitution any express grant of power for such purpose, and it could never be Constitutional to exercise that power, save in the event the powers granted to Congress could not be carried into effect without resorting to such an institution.' The latter branch of your inquiry is fully answered by my answer to the first part. The Constitution confers on Congress, in express terms, 'all powers which are necessary and proper' to carry into effect the granted powers. Now, if 'the powers granted' could not be carried into effect without incorporating a bank, then it becomes 'necessary and proper,' and of course, expedient: a conclusion which I presume no one would deny who desired to see the existence of the Government preserved, and kept beneficially in operation. Whether I would or would not exert the veto, it will be time enough for me to say when I am either a candidate for, or an expectant of the Presidential office—neither of which I expect ever to be. If your question had been so varied as to have inquired of me what course I would pursue if elevated to the Vice-Presidency, and I should be called upon to vote upon a bill for the incorporation of a bank, you should have had a direct and emphatic answer. As it is, I have only to refer you to my speech delivered in the House of Representatives of the United States in 1819, on the question of issuing a *scire facias* against the Bank, and my vote given in the Senate of the United States in 1832, on the question of rechartering the late Bank.

"6. That Congress has a right to impose duties on merchandise imported, none can deny. The rate of duties, you are well aware, is called a tariff of duties. The power 'to lay duties' is given by the Constitution in

express terms. The right to select the articles of import on which to levy the duties is unquestionable. Every duty imposed operates *pro tanto* as a bounty on the production of the same article at home, and it has been considered a wise policy on the part of all Administrations so to impose the duties as to advance the production of such articles as were of national importance. I certainly do not doubt the policy or expediency of such a course. The duties, however, should be laid with reference to revenue, except where they are laid to counteract the policy of a foreign government, and with a view to the regulation of trade. I have no hesitation in saying that I regard the Compromise Law as obligatory on the country, and that I am resolved, so far as it depends on myself, to carry out its provisions in good faith.

"7. This question is a mere abstraction in the present condition of the treasury, for there is no money there to carry out any system of internal improvements. My votes are repeatedly recorded on the journals of Congress against the power of Congress over this subject, in all its phases and aspects, as well in regard to roads and canals as to harbors and rivers. The first—viz., appropriations to roads and canals—have well-nigh entirely ceased, while annual appropriations, to a large amount, have been made to harbors and rivers, with the sanction and approval of the President of the United States.

"8. What General Harrison may have said, written, or done upon the subject of the Proclamation or Force Bill, and whether he approved of Mr. Webster's speech upon those subjects, is as well known to yourselves as to me. I have had no conversation with him on such subjects, nor have I ever received any communication from him in relation to them. I have before me his speech delivered at Dayton, in which I find this emphatic sentence: 'If the Augean stable is to be cleansed, it will be necessary to go back to the principles of Jefferson;' at an

earlier part of the same speech the following: 'I have been charged with being a Federalist. I deny that I ever belonged to that class of politicians. How could I belong to that party? I was educated in the school of Anti-Federalism,' etc. These sentiments are decidedly at variance with the doctrines of the Proclamation, and are but recently expressed. All, therefore, that I can say to you is, that I do not doubt that if you will apply to him for information upon the subjects referred to in your question, he will promptly give it; and I take leave to recommend that you pursue a similar course toward Mr. Van Buren.

"9. Whether General Harrison would veto a charter for a Bank of the United States, I have no other knowledge than that given by him to the public in his letter to Sherrod Williams, and in his Dayton speech. That he denies to the Government the right to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia without the consent of the States of Virginia and Maryland and the people of the District, is sufficiently proven by his letter to Judge Berrien, already quoted. That he denies to Congress all power over slavery in the District is proven by the same letter, and many speeches of his in print. That while he believes the power to exist in Congress to construct roads and canals, yet that he no longer believes it prudent or expedient to exercise it, he has repeatedly declared; and his determination to adhere to the principles of the Compromise Act he has also declared.

"10. I unhesitatingly declare it as my firm conviction that William Henry Harrison is qualified to guard and promote the liberties and happiness of his country, because he is the stern and unflinching advocate of popular rights, and the uncompromising opponent of the bold and daring assumptions of powers which have of late years been claimed and exercised by the Chief Executive Magistrate of this Union; because he regards the public offices of the

country as created for the benefit and advantage of the people, and not for the political advantage of the President, and in that spirit utterly denies the right, on the part of the President, to remove from office one who is 'honest, capable, and faithful to the Constitution,' to make way for another whose chief recommendation is to be found in his being a noisy and clamorous demagogue and partisan; because he would carry with him into the Administration the principles of Jefferson, and would require of the office-holders to abstain from interfering in the elections, and to bestow a close attention to their duties, in place of the active partisanship which is now everywhere exhibited; because he is committed by his principles to recommend and to urge upon Congress the adoption of such measures as will ultimate in the committing the custody of the public moneys to other hands than the President's, so as effectually to separate the purse from the sword; because he is in favor of economy in the public expenditures, in opposition to that wasteful course of extravagance which has caused the public expenditures to increase, in ten years, from thirteen million dollars, exclusive of the payment of the public debt, to near forty million dollars annually; because he is the sworn enemy to corruption, and the lover of virtue; because in his election, and by his example, will be established and secured that greatest of all reforms, without which the effort at reformation is hopeless, viz., the limiting for all future time the Presidential term of service to a single term of four years; and because he is an honest man, a Republican in principle, and a patriot in practice.

"I might find other reasons in the history of his past life—a life devoted to the service of his country—but I have fully answered your inquiries.

"Having responded fully and freely to your inquiries, I am, gentlemen, your most obedient servant,

"JOHN TYLER."

The extreme harshness and impertinence of this Henrico letter would have justified Mr. Tyler in throwing it aside unnoticed, and especially as it came from men who had not the remotest idea of voting for him, no matter what kind of reply he should make. His reply is a fine specimen of sharp practice, and, although it is not very satisfactory, serving, perhaps, to mislead some of the Whigs, it is as explicit as the purposes of the questioners sanctioned. There is no mistaking the fact, however, that Mr. Tyler was not quite at ease in the company in which he was. He had undoubted confidence in General Harrison, but he himself was only an opponent of the present Administration of affairs, with the hope and belief that he should not be called upon to place his own radical opinions against those who were really the leaders of the great crusade for the overthrow of the party in power, which all alike regarded as corrupt and injurious to the country. His entire conduct throughout the campaign appeared to rest on the desire to fulfill in good faith all he had undertaken with the Whigs. He knew or believed that Mr. Clay was pledged to a general course that would not conflict materially with his own views. As to the compromise tariff, he believed Mr. Clay bound to sanction no departure at present; and, as to another charter of a bank, he also had the best of reason to believe that Mr. Clay would not press the matter forward, at least. The defeat of Mr. Clay in the convention removed these obligations, yet he believed that

General Harrison's course would not be materially different, and, perhaps, less in harmony with the aggressive Whig tendencies than would have marked the policy of Mr. Clay. Mr. Tyler only desired to be Vice-President, and, in that case, he would rarely, if ever, need to come in conflict with the Whigs as the National Republican or Federal party, to whose principles he had never committed himself. The nominating convention at Harrisburg had designedly adopted no platform, and no pledges had been sought. Neither the members of that convention nor their constituents could have agreed upon a platform. Indeed, it was not desirable to be clear and explicit about anything. Nor did the leaders of the opposition understand, or care to understand, one another always. Mr. Tyler felt himself to be in a company whose acts he would not, perhaps, be willing to sanction at times, and while he had no idea that he would be called upon to do so, he made an earnest effort to reconcile any apparent discrepancies between General Harrison and himself, and did not, in the least, shrink from revealing his own position, and the consistency with which he had always held to his early Jeffersonian, Anti-Federalist, State-Rights education and principles. During the campaign he made a trip to Ohio, and "canvassed" a part of that State, spending much of his time in the company of General Harrison. He did not believe that the General differed from himself very materially on the financial and other leading issues. Nor did the Whigs, or, more properly, the men constituting the opposition in Virginia and other

parts of the South, believe that General Harrison was a Bank man, a high-tariff man, or that he had extravagant views about internal improvements, or anything else greatly contrary to their own principles. They were ready to believe that under his Administration the great objects would be, "To restore the Constitution, the charter of public liberty, to authority; to reduce the more than monarch's power of the President of the United States; to rid the country of the rogues who have stolen millions of its money; to arrest the fatal doctrines which have sprung from the Proclamation, and been suggested and upheld by the sovereign popularity of General Jackson; to check the audacity of trading politicians who bargain away the offices and power of the American people. Nothing selfish enters into the views of the Whig party. They want no Federal Bank; they want to reduce the public burthens and the public expenditures, not to increase them." Thus the contest went on, and the things hoped for and sought after in the South were far away from those that gave inspiration to the tongues of Whig leaders at the North.

On the 10th of February, 1845, the electoral votes were counted in the hall of the House of Representatives, the result for Vice-President being:—

John Tyler, of Virginia,	234
Richard M. Johnson, of Kentucky,	48
Littleton W. Tazewell, of Virginia,	11
James K. Polk, of Tennessee,	1
	<hr/>
Total,	294

Whereupon the President of the Senate announced that John Tyler, of Virginia, having a majority of the whole number of electoral votes, is duly elected Vice-President of the United States, for four years, commencing with the fourth day of March next, 1841.

Mr. Tyler received the same electoral vote as General Harrison, and from the same States. South Carolina gave her vote for Vice-President to Littleton W. Tazewell, of Virginia, who was not a candidate; and that State this time voted squarely for Mr. Van Buren. The Whigs, and more than the Whigs, were greatly delighted with the result; and they had no reasonable grounds for any other belief than that Mr. Tyler would as Vice-President throw nothing in the way of their administration of national affairs.

In writing of the wonderful demonstrations at Washington on the inauguration of the new Administration Mr. Benton says:—

“March the 4th, at twelve o'clock, the Senate met in its chamber, as summoned to do by the retiring President, to be ready for the inauguration of the President elect, and the transaction of such Executive business as he should bring before it. The body was quite full, and was called to order by the Secretary, Mr. Asbury Dickens; and Mr. King, of Alabama, being elected temporary President of the Senate, administered the oath of office to the Vice-President elect, John Tyler, Esq., who immediately took the chair as President of the Senate. The scene in the chamber was simple and impressive. The Senators were in their seats; members of the House in chairs. The justices of the Supreme Court and the foreign diplomatic corps were in the front semicircle of chairs on the floor of the Senate. Officers of the army and navy were

present, many citizens, and some ladies. Every part of the chamber and galleries was crowded, and it required a vigilant police to prevent the entrance of more than the allotted number. After the Vice-President elect had taken his seat, and delivered to the Senate, over which he was to preside, a well-conceived, well-expressed, and well-delivered address, appropriately brief, a short pause and silence ensued."

The following is Mr. Tyler's address to the Senate:—

"SENATORS,—Called by the people of the United States to preside over your deliberations, I can not withhold the expression of the high estimate I place on the honor which they have conferred upon me. To occupy the seat which has been filled and adorned (to say nothing of my more immediate predecessors) by an Adams, a Jefferson, a Gerry, a Clinton, and a Tompkins—names that, although belonging to the dead, still live in the recollection of a grateful country—is an honor of which any man would have just cause to be proud. But this honor is greatly augmented by the consideration of the true character of this body; by the high order of moral and intellectual power which has distinguished it in all past time, and which still distinguishes it; by the dignity which has, for the most part, marked its proceedings; and, above all, by the important duties which have devolved upon it under the Constitution. Here are to be found the immediate Representatives of the States, by whose sovereign will the Government has been spoken into existence. Here exists that perfect equality among the members of this Confederacy which gives to the smallest State in the Union a voice as potential as that of the largest. To this body is committed, in an eminent degree, the trust of guarding and protecting the institutions handed down to us from our fathers, as well against the

waves of popular and rash impulses on the one hand as against attempts at Executive encroachment on the other. It may properly be regarded as holding the balance in which are weighed the powers conceded to this Government, and the rights reserved to the States and to the people. It is its province to concede what has been granted, to withhold what has been denied; thus in all its features exhibiting a true type of the glorious Confederacy under which it is our happiness to live. Should the spirit of faction—that destructive spirit which recklessly walks over prostrate rights and tramples laws and Constitutions in the dust—ever find an abiding-place within this hall, then, indeed, will a sentence of condemnation be issued against the peace and happiness of this people, and their political institutions be made to topple to their foundations. But while this body shall continue to be what by its framers it was designed to be, deliberative in its character, unbiased in its course, and independent in its action, then may Liberty be regarded as intrenched in safety behind the sacred ramparts of the Constitution.

“While I occupy this chair, Senators, I shall have frequent occasion to invoke your indulgence for my defects, and your charity for my errors. I am but little skilled in parliamentary law, and have been unused to preside over deliberative assemblies. All that I can urge in excuse of my defects is, that I bring with me to this chair an earnest wish to discharge properly its duties, and a fixed determination to preside over your deliberations with entire impartiality.”

“One month after the installation the Whigs were struck mute by the death of the President—event all unlooked for, unprovided against; sorrowful on many accounts, but most calamitous for its first and greatest consequence—the exaltation of him whom the accidents of the Harrisburg Convention had brought

upon the ticket for the Vice-Presidency." So wrote a defender of the Whigs. And so felt thousands of others who really had no unkind sentiments towards John Tyler as Vice-President. Soon after the inauguration Mr. Tyler had returned to his home at Williamsburg, and there, from the hands of Daniel Fletcher Webster, he received the following notice of the death of President Harrison:—

"WASHINGTON, April 4, 1841.

"To JOHN TYLER, Vice-President of the United States:—

"SIR,—It has become our most painful duty to inform you that William Henry Harrison, late President of the United States, has departed this life.

"This distressing event took place this day, at the President's Mansion, in this city, at thirty minutes before one in the morning.

"We lose no time in dispatching the Chief Clerk in the State Department, as a special messenger, to bear you these melancholy tidings.

"We have the honor to be, with the highest regard, your obedient servants."

This paper was signed by Webster, Ewing, Bell, Crittenden, and Granger, of the Cabinet, Mr. Badger being absent.

Before daybreak on the 6th, Mr. Tyler arrived in Washington, and took up his residence temporarily at Brown's Hotel, where, at noon, he called together or was visited by all the members of General Harrison's Cabinet, then at the Capital, Mr. Badger being absent. He invited them all to retain their places, and expressed great confidence in them. On the same day, before Judge William Cranch, of the Dis-

trict Circuit Court, Mr. Tyler took the following oath, and entered upon the unexpected office :—

“I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. JOHN TYLER.

“APRIL 6, 1841.”

At this time John Quincy Adams entered in his Diary this opinion :—

“Tyler is a political sectarian, of the slave-driving, Virginian, Jeffersonian school, principled against all improvement, with all the interests and passions and vices of slavery rooted in his moral and political constitution ; with talents not above mediocrity, and a spirit incapable of expansion to the dimensions of the station upon which he has been cast by the hand of Providence, unseen through the apparent agency of chance.”

This ungraceful estimate of Mr. Tyler reflects no more upon him, perhaps, than it does upon the “hand of Providence,” which the Whigs had never dreamed would come in their way in any such a manner. Mr. Adams had preferred the election of John Tyler to the Vice-Presidency, as a choice of evils, perhaps, but he knew him, and could not have felt wronged or disappointed by any course he should pursue. But the unexpected, supreme moment had come, and Mr. Adams felt an utter distrust of the man who had been brought to the President’s Chair by the “hand of Providence.”

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT WAS HE TO BE CALLED?—MR. TYLER DECIDES
AN IMPORTANT QUESTION—CONGRESS IN
SESSION—MESSAGE.

THERE were no precedents to direct the course of Mr. Tyler. The event which brought him to discharge the duties of the Presidency had never before occurred in the history of the Republic. But his conduct now was to establish a course on some points for all after times. The relations between Mr. Tyler and the Cabinet of President Harrison were peculiar and vague, and although the difficulty the situation involved seemed to be adjusted at the outset by the action of Mr. Tyler, the case was really embarrassing. About the position of the new President the Cabinet appeared to be less decided than it was as to its own Constitutional standing. Indeed the first question of importance to be settled by the Cabinet of President Harrison was as to what name or distinction the Vice-President should bear while executing the functions of President. This able group of men finally arrived at the conclusion that Mr. Tyler should retain the title of the office to which he had been elected, and now be styled "Vice-President

of the United States, acting President." This view of the case was in harmony with public feeling, to some extent, as there was for a long time considerable hostility throughout the country towards any tendency to call Mr. Tyler President. But to all this he gave no heed; and the country had reason to be gratified with the fact that Mr. Tyler entertained a wiser and better understanding of the situation, and a will to carry it into practice. He was not going to trifle with a plain easy case, or humor men in an attempt to secure themselves in suspicions against himself for which he was no way responsible. From the very first step he treated himself as President, and this he continued to do. He was to perform all the functions of the office. The Vice-President had simply become President in a way provided by the Constitution. His conduct fixed the future course of the case, and proved to be very satisfactory to the entire country. From the time Mr. Tyler displayed his courage and good judgment in this extraordinary matter, there has been no question about the title and standing of the Vice-President who became President under similar circumstances.

In the arrangements and ceremonies attending the funeral of General Harrison Mr. Tyler acted with propriety, and earnestly and, no doubt, truthfully, exhibited his sympathy and good dispositions towards the Whigs, who, he felt, would look upon the change in their affairs with great anxiety, if not positive alarm on his account. He had the courage to go

forward, and the heart to reassure the Whigs that he was not an enemy in the camp. His overflowing sympathy and consequent excesses of friendship at this time laid him liable to much censure from disappointed Whigs subsequently. It is claimed, and perhaps with perfect truth, that Mr. Tyler said to some of the Whigs at this discouraging period by way of pacifying their fears: "You have but exchanged one Whig for another." To another he said: "If the Democrats and myself ever come together, they must come to me; I shall never go to them." "Oliver Old School" is authority for this announcement, and yet few persons had a better opportunity to know how far the excitements of the moment were likely to affect any man situated as Mr. Tyler was, and what his past record was, than "Old School." All the favorable things on the Whig doctrines that Mr. Tyler had ever said were now remembered and brought forward. Every step he had taken since his withdrawal from the Senate and his nomination for the Vice-Presidency was carefully scrutinized. At every straw the Whigs caught. Nor were they willing to hope merely for the best. They fixed their plans. They had carried the Congressional elections, and besides held that the moral force was on their side. They were going to compel Mr. Tyler to do what they would do themselves, if he should appear otherwise inclined. But these things will be shown in the progress of events. And now the most and least that should be assumed, perhaps, in the state in which matters were may be expressed

in the following statement of **one** of the fairest of political writers :—

“There can be no doubt that Mr. Tyler mistook his position in attempting to act with the Whig party, and in accepting their nomination for one of the highest offices in the Nation, which, by the dispensation of Providence, placed him in the Presidential Chair, clothed with the power and patronage of that high station. That the Whigs also acted without due reflection in his nomination is alike evident; and from these two causes flowed the consequences which resulted in the embarrassment, difficulties, and total loss of popularity with both the great parties of the country, on the one side, of the President, and bitter disappointment and chagrin on the part of the Whigs.”

The first public act of Mr. Tyler was to send out the following address :—

“TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

“**FELLOW-CITIZENS,**—Before my arrival at the seat of Government, the painful communication was made to you by the officers presiding over the several Departments, of the deeply regretted death of William Henry Harrison, late President of the United States. Upon him you had conferred your suffrages for the first office in your gift, and had selected him as your chosen instrument to correct and reform all such errors and abuses as had manifested themselves, from time to time, in the practical operation of the Government. While standing at the threshold of this great work, he has, by the dispensation of an all-wise Providence, been removed from among us, and by the provisions of the Constitution the efforts to be directed to the accomplishing of this vitally important task have devolved upon myself. This same occurrence has subjected the wisdom and sufficiency of our institutions to a

new test. For the first time in our history the person elected to the Vice-Presidency of the United States, by the happening of a contingency provided for in the Constitution, has had devolved upon him the Presidential office. The spirit of faction, which is directly opposed to the spirit of a lofty patriotism, may find in this occasion for assaults upon my Administration. And in succeeding, under circumstances so sudden and unexpected, and to responsibilities so greatly augmented, to the administration of public affairs, I shall place in the intelligence and patriotism of the people my only sure reliance. My earnest prayer shall be constantly addressed to the all-wise and all-powerful Being who made me, and by whose dispensation I am called to the high office of President of this Confederacy, understandingly to carry out the principles of that Constitution which I have sworn 'to protect, preserve, and defend.'

"The usual opportunity which is afforded to a Chief Magistrate upon his induction to office, of presenting to his countrymen an exposition of the policy which would guide his Administration, in the form of an inaugural address, not having, under the peculiar circumstances which have brought me to the discharge of the high duties of President of the United States, been afforded to me, a brief exposition of the principles which will govern me in the general course of my administration of public affairs would seem to be due as well to myself as to you. In regard to foreign nations, the groundwork of my policy will be justice on our part to all, submitting to injustice from none. While I shall sedulously cultivate the relations of peace and amity with one and all, it will be my most imperative duty to see that the honor of the country shall sustain no blemish. With a view to this, the condition of our military defenses will become a matter of anxious solicitude. The army, which has in other days covered itself with renown, and the navy, not inappropri-

ately termed the right arm of the public defense, which has spread a light of glory over the American standard in all the waters of the earth, should be rendered replete with efficiency.

“In view of the fact, well avouched by history, that the tendency of all human institutions is to concentrate power in the hands of a single man, and that their ultimate downfall has proceeded from this cause, I deem it of the most essential importance that a complete separation should take place between the sword and the purse. No matter where or how the public moneys shall be deposited, so long as the President can exert the power of appointing and removing, at his pleasure, the agents selected for their custody, the commander-in-chief of the army and navy is, in fact, the treasurer. A permanent and radical change should therefore be decreed. The patronage incident to the Presidential office, already great, is constantly increasing. Such increase is destined to keep pace with the growth of our population, until, without a figure of speech, an army of office-holders may be spread over the land. The unrestrained power exerted by a selfishly ambitious man, in order either to perpetuate his authority or to hand it over to some favorite as his successor, may lead to the employment of all the means within his control to accomplish his object. The right to remove from office, while subjected to no just restraint is inevitably destined to produce a spirit of crouching servility with the official corps, which, in order to uphold the hand which feeds them, would lead to direct and active interference in the elections, both State and Federal, thereby subjecting the course of State legislation to the dictation of the Chief Executive officer, and making the will of that officer absolute and supreme. I will, at a proper time, invoke the action of Congress upon this subject, and shall readily acquiesce in the adoption of all proper measures which are calculated to arrest these evils, so full of danger in their

tendency. I will remove no incumbent from office who has faithfully and honestly acquitted himself of the duties of his office, except in such cases where such officer has been guilty of an active partisanship, or by secret means—the less manly, and, therefore, the more objectionable—has given his official influence to the purposes of party, thereby bringing the patronage of the Government in conflict with the freedom of elections. Numerous removals may become necessary under this rule. These will be made by me through no acerbity of feeling. I have had no cause to cherish or indulge unkind feelings toward any, but my conduct will be regulated by a profound sense of what is due to the country and its institutions; nor shall I neglect to apply the same unbending rule to those of my own appointment. Freedom of opinion will be tolerated; the full enjoyment of the right of suffrage will be maintained as the birthright of every American citizen; but I say emphatically to the official corps, ‘Thus far, and no farther.’ I have dwelt the longer upon this subject, because removals from office are likely often to arise, and I would have my countrymen to understand the principles of the Executive action.

“In all public expenditures the most rigid economy should be resorted to, and, as one of its results, a public debt in time of peace be sedulously avoided. A wise and patriotic constituency will never object to the imposition of necessary burdens for useful ends; and true wisdom dictates the resort to such means in order to supply deficiencies in the revenue, rather than to those doubtful expedients, which, ultimating in a public debt, serve to embarrass the resources of the country, and to lessen its ability to meet any great emergency which may arise. All sinecures should be abolished. The appropriations should be direct and explicit, so as to leave as limited a share of discretion to the disbursing agent as may be found compatible with the public service. A strict

responsibility on the part of all the agents of the Government should be maintained, and speculation or defalcation visited with immediate expulsion from office and the most condign punishment.

"The public interest also demands that if any war has existed between the Government and the currency it shall cease. Measures of a financial character now having the sanction of legal enactment shall be faithfully enforced until repealed by the legislative authority. But I owe it to myself to declare that I regard existing enactments as unwise and impolitic, and in a high degree oppressive. I shall promptly give my sanction to any Constitutional measure which, originating in Congress, shall have for its object the restoration of a sound circulating medium, so essentially necessary to give confidence in all the transactions of life, to secure to industry its just and adequate rewards, and to re-establish the public prosperity. In deciding upon the adaptation of any such measure to the end proposed, as well as its conformity to the Constitution, I shall resort to the fathers of the great republican school for advice and instruction, to be drawn from their sage views of our system of Government, and the light of their ever glorious example.

"The institutions under which we live, my countrymen, secure each person in the perfect enjoyment of all his rights. The spectacle is exhibited to the world of a Government deriving its powers from the consent of the governed, and having imparted to it only so much power as is necessary for its successful operation. Those who are charged with its administration should carefully abstain from all attempts to enlarge the range of powers thus granted to the several departments of the Government, other than by an appeal to the people for additional grants, lest by so doing they disturb that balance which the patriots and statesmen who framed the Constitution designed to establish between the Federal Government

and the States composing the Union. The observance of these rules is enjoined upon us by that feeling of reverence and affection which finds a place in the heart of every patriot for the preservation of Union and the blessings of Union—for the good of our children, and our children's children, through countless generations. An opposite course could not fail to generate factions, intent upon the gratification of their selfish ends; to give birth to local and sectional jealousies, and to ultimate either in breaking asunder the bonds of Union, or in building up a central system, which would inevitably end in a bloody scepter and an iron crown.

"In conclusion, I beg you to be assured that I shall exert myself to carry the foregoing principles into practice during my administration of the Government; and, confiding in the protecting care of an ever-watchful and overruling Providence, it shall be my first and highest duty to preserve unimpaired the free institutions under which we live, and transmit them to those who shall succeed me in their full force and vigor.

"JOHN TYLER.

"WASHINGTON, April 9, 1841."

There is no mistake as to the pacific tone of this address. Nor is there much ground for complaint of plainness, fairness, and justness; unless it be maintained that Mr. Tyler was insincere. From any known standard of judgment that position no man would, perhaps, be justified in taking. In the address Mr. Tyler had not set aside his former record. His appeals to "my countrymen" he had made even when he was stating, in the Senate, that he recognized none but citizens of the States. The financial paragraph was liable to a double construction, and this, of course, it received. The hand

of artifice, however, no more occurs in this paragraph than does the basis for the charge of insincerity. It was doubtless the clearest expression he could give of his real desires and sentiments on the subject.

But this address drew forth considerable unfavorable criticism, especially from the Democrats, who seemed to see in it that Mr. Tyler had gone entirely over to the Whigs, taking Bank and all, and deserting all his earlier public principles. If they had a scintillation of hope, this address dispelled it. In Mr. Benton's "view" of the address he says:—

"Two blemishes were seen in this paragraph, the first being in that sentence which spoke of the 'errors and abuses' of the Government which his predecessor had been elected to 'correct and reform;' and the correction and reformation of which now devolved upon himself. These imputed errors and abuses could only apply to the administrations of General Jackson and Mr. Van Buren, of both which Mr. Tyler had been a zealous opponent; and therefore might not be admitted to be an impartial judge. Leaving that out of view, the bad taste of such a reference was palpable and repulsive. The second blemish was in that sentence in which he contrasted the spirit of 'faction' with the spirit of 'lofty patriotism,' and seemed to refer in advance all the 'assaults' which should be made upon his Administration to this factious spirit, warring upon elevated patriotism. Little did he think, when he wrote that sentence, that within three short months—within less time than a commercial bill of exchange usually has to run, the great party which had elected him, and the cabinet officers which he had just appointed with such warm expressions of respect and confidence, should be united in that assault—should all be in the lead and van of a public outcry against him!"

The following proclamation must also be read at this time as bearing on the spirit which actuated the new President:—

“TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

“*A Recommendation.*

“When a Christian people feel themselves to be overtaken by a great public calamity, it becomes them to humble themselves, under the dispensation of Divine Providence, to recognize his righteous government over the children of men, to acknowledge his goodness in time past, as well as their own unworthiness, and to supplicate his merciful protection for the future.

“The death of William Henry Harrison, late President of the United States, so soon after his elevation to that high office, is a bereavement peculiarly calculated to be regarded as a heavy affliction, and to impress all minds with a sense of the uncertainty of human things, and of the dependence of nations, as well as of individuals, upon our Heavenly Parent.

“I have thought, therefore, that I should be acting in conformity with the general expectation and feelings of the community in recommending, as I now do, to the people of the United States, of every religious denomination, that, according to their several modes and forms of worship, they observe a day of fasting and prayer, by such religious services as may be suitable on the occasion; and I recommend Friday, the fourteenth day of May next, for that purpose; to the end that, on that day, we may all, with one accord, join in humble and reverential approach to Him in whose hands we are, invoking him to inspire us with a proper spirit and temper of heart and mind under these frowns of his providence, and still to bestow his gracious benedictions upon our Government and our country.

JOHN TYLER.

“WASHINGTON, April 13, 1841.”

This proclamation certainly further exhibits Mr. Tyler's anxiety to meet the expectations of the people. His recommendation was kindly received, and without partisan feeling, great respect was shown to the memory of General Harrison. No one felt his loss more keenly than did Mr. Tyler, and no one felt so deeply the political obligations and weight implied in his death.

President Tyler was under no moral obligations to enter upon his Administration of affairs with the Cabinet selected by General Harrison. It had been formed without reference to him; and yet he asked no change. This act may have an unfavorable side to it, but as far as there is any fair ground of judgment this must be set down, to a great extent, to his strong desire to meet public expectations, to meet the expectations of the party with which he was thrown. That his motives and final purposes had in view more than is seen in his conduct there seems to be no means of deciding. His future actions will be justified or condemned by the circumstances which surround and appear to give foundation to them. Mr. Tyler was not destined to be left for the summer to arrange his plans or to see calmly the difficulties that lay before him. General Harrison had called Congress to meet in extra session May 31st. If this call was not to satisfy party clamor there is no very well-defined or satisfactory foundation for it. But be this as it may, Mr. Tyler did not see fit to change the arrangement, and, at the appointed time, Congress convened.

John White, a Kentucky Whig, was elected Speaker over John W. Jones, Democrat, of Virginia. The House had a large Whig majority, and even the Senate was at that time Whig. It must be observed here that Mississippi was not represented in this special session, her Congressional election not taking place until in November. The Representatives from Illinois were not elected until in August, but took their seats towards the end of the session.

In the House, after its organization, a foolish scene occurred in an attempt to avoid calling Mr. Tyler President; but this ended as it should have done. Mr. Tyler himself never made any issue on this point, as has been mentioned.

The President now sent to Congress by his son, Robert, his

MESSAGE—SPECIAL SESSION.

June 1, 1841.

TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES:—

FELLOW-CITIZENS,—You have been assembled in your respective halls of legislation, under a proclamation bearing the signature of the illustrious citizen who was so lately called, by the direct suffrages of the people, to the discharge of the important functions of their Chief Executive office. Upon the expiration of a single month from the day of his installation he has paid the great debt of nature, leaving behind him a name associated with the recollection of numerous benefits conferred upon the country during a long life of patriotic devotion. With this public bereavement are connected other considerations which will not escape the attention of Congress. The preparations necessary for his removal to the seat of Government, in view of a residence of four years, must have devolved

upon the late President heavy expenditures, which, if permitted to burden the limited resources of his private fortune, may tend to the serious embarrassment of his surviving family; and it is, therefore, respectfully submitted to Congress whether the ordinary principles of justice would not dictate the propriety of its legislative interposition. By the provisions of the fundamental law the powers and duties of the high station to which he was elected have devolved upon me; and in the disposition of the Representatives of the States and the people will be found, to a great extent, a solution of the problem to which our institutions are, for the first time, subjected.

In entering upon the duties of this office, I did not feel that it would be becoming in me to disturb what had been ordered by my lamented predecessor. Whatever, therefore, may have been my opinion originally as to the propriety of convening Congress at so early a day from that of its late adjournment, I found a new and controlling inducement not to interfere with the patriotic desires of the late President, in the novelty of the situation in which I was so unexpectedly placed. My first wish under such circumstances would necessarily have been to have called to my aid, in the administration of public affairs, the combined wisdom of the two Houses of Congress, in order to take their counsel and advice as to the best mode of extricating the Government and the country from the embarrassments weighing heavily on both. I am, then, most happy in finding myself, so soon after my accession to the Presidency, surrounded by the immediate representatives of the States and people.

No important changes having taken place in our foreign relations since the last session of Congress, it is not deemed necessary, on this occasion, to go into a detailed statement in regard to them. I am happy to say that I see nothing to destroy the hope of being able to preserve peace.

The ratification of the treaty with Portugal has been duly exchanged between the two governments. This Government has not been inattentive to the interests of those of our citizens who have claims on the government of Spain, founded on express treaty stipulations; and a hope is indulged that the

representations which have been made to that Government on this subject, may lead, ere long to beneficial results.

A correspondence has taken place between the Secretary of State and the Minister of her Britannic Majesty accredited to this Government, on the subject of Alexander McLeod's indictment and imprisonment, copies of which are herewith communicated to Congress.

In addition to what appears from these papers, it may be proper to state that Alexander McLeod has been heard by the Supreme Court of the State of New York, on his motion to be discharged from imprisonment, and that the decision of that court has not as yet been pronounced.

The Secretary of State has addressed to me a paper upon two subjects, interesting to the commerce of the country, which will receive my consideration, and which I have the honor to communicate to Congress.

So far as it depends on the course of this Government, our relations of good-will and friendship will be sedulously cultivated with all nations. The true American policy will be found to consist in the exercise of a spirit of justice to be manifested in the discharge of all our international obligations to the weakest of the family of nations as well as to the most powerful. Occasional conflicts of opinion may arise, but when the discussions incident to them are conducted in the language of truth, and with a strict regard to justice, the scourge of war will for the most part be avoided. The time ought to be regarded as having gone by when a resort to arms is to be esteemed as the only proper arbiter of national differences.

The census recently taken shows a regularly progressive increase in our population. Upon the breaking out of the War of the Revolution, our numbers scarcely equaled three millions of souls; they already exceed seventeen millions, and will continue to progress in a ratio which duplicates in a period of about twenty-three years. The old States contain a territory sufficient in itself to maintain a population of additional millions, and the most populous of the new States may even yet be regarded as but partially settled; while of the new lands on this side of the Rocky Mountains, to say nothing of the immense region which stretches from the base of those mountains to the

mouth of the Columbia River, about two hundred and seventy millions of acres, ceded and unceded, still remain to be brought into market. We hold out to the people of other countries an invitation to come and settle among us as members of our rapidly growing family; and for the blessings which we offer them, we require of them to look upon our country as their country, and to unite with us in the great task of preserving our institutions, and thereby perpetuating our liberties. No motive exists for foreign conquests; we desire but to reclaim our almost illimitable wilderness, and to introduce into their depth the lights of civilization. While we shall at all times be prepared to vindicate the national honor, our most earnest desire will be to maintain an unbroken peace.

In presenting the foregoing views, I can not withhold the expression of the opinion that there exists nothing in the extension of our empire over our acknowledged possessions to excite the alarm of the patriot for the safety of our institutions. The federative system, leaving to each State the care of its domestic concerns, and devolving on the Federal Government those of general import, admits in safety of the greatest expansion; but, at the same time, I deem it proper to add that there will be found to exist, at all times, an imperious necessity for restraining all the functionaries of the Government within the range of their respective powers, thereby preserving a just balance between the powers granted to this Government and those reserved to the States and to the people.

From the report of the Secretary of the Treasury, you will perceive that the fiscal means, present and accruing, are insufficient to supply the wants of the Government for the current year. The balance in the treasury on the fourth day of March last, not covered by outstanding drafts, and exclusive of trust funds, is estimated at eight hundred and sixty thousand dollars. This includes the sum of two hundred and fifteen thousand dollars deposited in the mint and its branches to procure metal for coining and in the process of coinage, and which could not be withdrawn without inconvenience—thus leaving subject to draft, in the various depositories, the sum of six hundred and forty-five thousand dollars. By virtue of two several acts of Congress, the Secretary of the Treasury was authorized to issue,

on and after the fourth day of March last, treasury-notes to the amount of five millions four hundred and thirteen thousand dollars, making an aggregate available fund on hand of six millions and fifty-eight thousand dollars.

But this fund was chargeable with outstanding treasury-notes redeemable in the current year, and interest thereon, to the estimated amount of five millions two hundred and eighty thousand dollars. There is also thrown upon the treasury the payment of a large amount of demands, accrued in whole or in part in former years, which will exhaust the available means of the treasury, and leave the accruing revenue, reduced as it is in amount, burdened with debt, and charged with the current expenses of the Government.

The aggregate amount of outstanding appropriations, on the fourth day of March last, was thirty-three millions four hundred and twenty-nine thousand six hundred and sixteen dollars and fifty cents, of which twenty-four millions two hundred and ten thousand three hundred dollars will be required during the current year; and there will also be required for the use of the War Department additional appropriations to the amount of two millions five hundred and eleven thousand one hundred and thirty-two dollars and ninety-eight cents, the special objects of which will be seen by reference to the report of the Secretary of War. The anticipated means of the treasury are greatly inadequate to this demand. The receipts from customs for the last three quarters of the last year and the first quarter of the present year amounted to twelve millions one hundred thousand dollars; the receipts for lands, for the same time, to two millions seven hundred and forty-two thousand four hundred and thirty dollars and sixty cents, showing an average revenue, from both sources, of one million two hundred and thirty-six thousand eight hundred and seventy dollars per month.

A gradual expansion of trade growing out of a restoration of confidence, together with a reduction in the expenses of collecting, and punctuality on the part of collecting officers, may cause an addition to the monthly receipts from the customs. They are estimated, for the residue of the year, from the 4th of March at twelve millions of dollars. The receipts from the public lands, for the same time, are estimated at two millions

five hundred thousand dollars, and from miscellaneous sources at one hundred and seventy thousand dollars; making an aggregate of available funds within the year of fifteen millions three hundred and fifteen thousand dollars, which will leave a probable deficit of eleven millions four hundred and six thousand one hundred and thirty-two dollars and ninety-eight cents. To meet this, some temporary provision is necessary, until the amount can be absorbed by the excess of revenues which are anticipated to accrue at no distant day.

There will fall due, within the next three months, treasury-notes of the issues of 1840, including interest, about two millions eight hundred and fifty thousand dollars. There is chargeable in the same period, for arrearages for taking the sixth census, two hundred and ninety-four thousand dollars, and the estimated expenditures for the current service are about eight millions one hundred thousand dollars, making the aggregate demand upon the treasury, prior to the 1st of September next, about eleven millions three hundred and forty thousand dollars.

The ways and means in the treasury, and estimated to accrue within the above named period, consist of about six hundred and ninety-four thousand dollars, of funds available on the 28th ultimo, an unissued balance of treasury-notes, authorized by the act of 1841, amounting to one million nine hundred and fifty-five thousand dollars, and estimated receipts from all sources, of three millions eight hundred thousand dollars, making an aggregate of about six millions four hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and leaving a probable deficit, on the 1st of September next, of four millions eight hundred and forty-five thousand dollars.

In order to supply the wants of the Government, an intelligent constituency, in view of their best interests, will, without hesitation submit to all necessary burdens. But it is, nevertheless, important so to impose them as to avoid defeating the just expectations of the country growing out of pre-existing laws. The act of the 2d of March, 1833, commonly called the Compromise Act, should not be altered, except under urgent necessities, which are not believed at this time to exist. One year only remains to complete the series of reductions provided for by that law, at which time provisions made by the same

law, and which then will be brought actively in aid of the manufacturing interests of the Union, will not fail to produce the most beneficial results. Under a system of discriminating duties, imposed for purposes of revenue, in union with the provisions of existing laws, it is to be hoped that our policy will in future be fixed and permanent, so as to avoid those constant fluctuations which defeat the very objects they have in view. We shall thus best maintain a position which, while it will enable us the more readily to meet the advances of other countries calculated to promote our trade and commerce, will at the same time leave in our own hands the means of retaliating, with greater effect, unjust regulations.

In intimate connection with the question of revenue is that which makes provision for a suitable fiscal agent, capable of adding increased facilities in the collection and disbursement of the public revenues, rendering more secure their custody, and consulting a true economy in the great, multiplied, and delicate operations of the Treasury Department. Upon such an agent depends, in an eminent degree, the establishment of a currency of uniform value, which is of so great importance to all the essential interests of society, and on the wisdom to be manifested in its creation much depends. So intimately interwoven are its operations, not only with the interests of individuals but of States, that it may be regarded as controlling both. If paper be used as the chief medium of circulation, and the power be vested in the Government of issuing it at pleasure, either in the form of treasury-drafts or any other; or, if banks be used as the public depositories, with liberty to regard all surpluses from day to day as so much added to their active capital, prices are exposed to constant fluctuations, and industry to severe suffering. In the one case, political considerations directed to party purposes may control, while excessive cupidity may prevail on the other. The public is thus constantly liable to imposition. Expansions and contractions may follow each other in rapid succession—the one engendering a reckless spirit of adventure and speculation, which embraces States as well as individuals—the other causing a fall in prices, and accomplishing an entire change in the aspect of affairs. Stocks of all sorts rapidly decline, individuals are ruined, and States

embarrassed—even in their efforts to meet with punctuality the interest on their debts. Such, unhappily, is the condition of things now existing in the United States. These effects may readily be traced to the causes above referred to. The public revenues being removed from the then Bank of the United States, under an order of a late President, were placed in selected State banks, which, actuated by the double motive of conciliating the Government and augmenting their profits to the greatest possible extent, enlarged extravagantly their discounts, thus enabling all existing banks to do the same; large dividends were declared, which, stimulating the cupidity of capitalists, caused a rush to be made to the Legislatures of the respective States for similar acts of incorporation, which, by many of the States, under a temporary infatuation, were readily granted; and thus the augmentation of the circulating medium, consisting almost exclusively of paper, produced a most fatal delusion. An illustration, derived from the land-sales of the period alluded to, will serve best to show the effect of the whole system. The average sales of the public lands for a period of ten years prior to 1834 had not much exceeded two millions of dollars per annum. In 1834 they attained, in round numbers, to the amount of six millions of dollars; in the succeeding year, of 1835, they reached sixteen millions of dollars; and the next year, of 1836, they amounted to the enormous sum of twenty-five millions of dollars—thus crowding into the short space of three years upwards of seventy-three years' purchase of the public domain. So apparent had become the necessity of arresting this course of things, that the Executive Department assumed the highly questionable power of discriminating in the funds to be used in payment by different classes of public debtors—a discrimination which was doubtlessly designed to correct this most ruinous state of things—by the exaction of specie in all payments for the public lands, but which could not at once arrest the tide which had so strongly set in. Hence the demands for specie became unceasing, and corresponding prostration rapidly ensued under the necessities created with the banks to curtail their discounts, and thereby to reduce their circulation. I recur to these things with no disposition to censure pre-existing Administrations of the Government, but simply

in exemplification of the truth of the position which I have assumed. If, then, any fiscal agent which may be created shall be placed, without due restrictions, either in the hands of the administrators of the Government or those of private individuals, the temptation to abuse will prove to be resistless. Objects of political aggrandizement may seduce the first, and the promptings of a boundless cupidity will assail the last. Aided by the experience of the past, it will be the pleasure of Congress so to guard and fortify the public interests, in the creation of any new agent, as to place them, so far as human wisdom can accomplish it, on a footing of perfect security. Within a few years past three different schemes have been before the country. The charter of the Bank of the United States expired by its own limitation in 1836; an effort was made to renew it, which received the sanction of the two Houses of Congress, but the then President of the United States exercised his veto power, and the measure was defeated.

A regard for the truth requires me to say that the President was fully sustained in the course he had taken by the popular voice. His successor to the Chair of State unqualifiedly pronounced his opposition to any new charter of a similar institution; and not only the popular election which brought him into power, but the elections through much of his term, seemed clearly to indicate a concurrence with him in sentiment on the part of the people. After the public moneys were withdrawn from the United States Bank they were placed in deposit with the State banks, and the result of that policy has been before the country. To say nothing as to the question whether that experiment was made under propitious or adverse circumstances, it may be safely asserted that it did receive the unqualified condemnation of most of its early advocates, and it is believed was condemned by the popular sentiment. The existing Sub-Treasury system does not seem to stand in higher favor with the people, but has recently been condemned in a manner too plainly indicated to admit of a doubt. Thus, in the short period of eight years, the popular voice may be regarded as having successively condemned each of the three schemes of finance to which I have adverted. As to the first, it was introduced at a time (1816) when the State banks, then

comparatively few in number, had been forced to suspend specie payment by reason of the war which had previously prevailed with Great Britain. Whether, if the United States Bank charter, which expired in 1811, had been renewed in due season, it would have been enabled to continue specie payment during the war, and the disastrous period to the commerce of the country which immediately succeeded, is, to say the least, problematical; and, whether the United States Bank of 1816 produced a restoration of specie payments, or the same was accomplished through the instrumentality of other means, was a matter of some difficulty at that time to determine: certain it is, that for the first years of the operations of that bank, its course was as disastrous as, for the greater part of its subsequent career, it became eminently successful. As to the second, the experiment was tried with a redundant Treasury, which continued to increase until it seemed to be the part of wisdom to distribute the surplus revenue among the States—which, operating at the same time with the specie circular, and the causes before adverted to, caused them to suspend specie payments, and involve the country in the greatest embarrassment. And as to the third, if carried through all the stages of its transmutation, from paper and specie to nothing but the precious metals, to say nothing of the insecurity of the public moneys, its injurious effects have been anticipated by the country in its unqualified condemnation. What is now to be regarded as the judgment of the American people on this whole subject I have no accurate means of determining but by appealing to their more immediate representatives. The late contest, which terminated in the election of General Harrison to the Presidency, was decided on principles well known and openly declared; and while the Sub-Treasury received in the result the most decided condemnation, yet no other scheme of finance seemed to have been concurred in.

To you, then, who have come more directly from the body of our common constituents, I submit the entire question, as best qualified to give a full exposition of their wishes and opinions. I shall be ready to concur with you in the adoption of such system as you may propose, reserving to myself the ultimate power of rejecting any measure which may, in my

view of it, conflict with the Constitution, or otherwise jeopard the prosperity of the country—a power which I could not part with even if I would, but which I will not believe any act of yours will call into requisition.

I can not avoid recurring, in connection with this subject, to the necessity which exists for adopting some suitable measure whereby the unlimited creation of banks by the States may be corrected in future. Such result can be most readily achieved by the consent of the States, to be expressed in the form of a compact among themselves, which they can only enter into with the consent and approbation of this Government—a consent which might, in the present emergency of the public demands, justifiably be given by Congress in advance of any action by the States, as an inducement to such action upon terms well defined by the act of tender. Such a measure, addressing itself to the calm reflection of the States, would find in the experience of the past, and the condition of the present, much to sustain it; and it is greatly to be doubted whether any scheme of finance can prove for any length of time successful, while the States shall continue in the unrestrained power of creating banking corporations. This power can only be limited by their consent.

With the adoption of a financial agency of a satisfactory character, the hope may be indulged that the country may once more return to a state of prosperity; measures auxiliary thereto, and in some measure inseparably connected with its success, will doubtless claim the attention of Congress. Among such, a distribution of the proceeds of the sales of the public lands, provided such distribution does not force upon Congress the necessity of imposing upon commerce heavier burdens than those contemplated by the Act of 1833, would act as an efficient remedial measure by being brought directly in aid of the States. As one sincerely devoted to the task of preserving a just balance in our system of Government by the maintenance of the States in a condition the most free and respectable, and in the full possession of all their power, I can no otherwise than feel desirous for their emancipation from the situation to which the pressure on their finances now subjects them. And while I must repudiate, as a measure founded in error, and

wanting Constitutional sanction, the slightest approach to an assumption by this Government of the debts of the States, yet I can see in the distribution adverted to much to recommend it.

The compacts between the proprietor States and this Government expressly guaranty to the States all the benefits which may arise from the sales. The mode by which this is to be effected addresses itself to the discretion of Congress as the trustee for the States; and its exercise, after the most beneficial manner, is restrained by nothing in the grants, or in the Constitution, so long as Congress shall consult that equality in the distribution which the compacts require. In the present condition of some of the States, the question of distribution may be regarded as substantially a question between direct and indirect taxation. If the distribution be not made in some form or other, the necessity will daily become more urgent with the debtor States for a resort to an oppressive system of direct taxation, or their credit, and necessarily their power and influence, will be greatly diminished. The payment of taxes, after the most inconvenient and oppressive mode, will be exacted in place of contributions for the most part voluntarily made, and therefore comparatively unoppressive. The States are emphatically the constituents of this Government; and we should be entirely regardless of the objects held in view by them, in the creation of this Government, if we could be indifferent to their good. The happy effects of such a measure upon all the States would be immediately manifested. With the debtor States it would effect the relief, to a great extent, of the citizens from a heavy burden of direct taxation which presses severely on the laboring classes, and eminently assist in restoring the general prosperity. An immediate advance would take place in the price of the State securities, and the attitude of the States would become once more, as it should ever be, lofty and erect. With States laboring under no extreme pressure from debt, the fund which they would derive from this source would enable them to improve their condition in an eminent degree. So far as this Government is concerned, appropriations to domestic objects approaching in amount the revenue derived from the land-sales might be abandoned, and thus a system of unequal and therefore unjust legislation would

be substituted by one dispensing equality to all the members of this Confederacy. Whether such distribution should be made directly to the States in the proceeds of the sales, or in the form of profits by virtue of the operations of any fiscal agency having those proceeds as its basis, should such measure be contemplated by Congress, would well deserve its consideration. Nor would such disposition of the proceeds of the sales, in any manner, prevent Congress from time to time from passing all necessary pre-emption laws for the benefit of actual settlers, or from making any new arrangement as to the price of the public lands which might in future be esteemed desirable.

I beg leave particularly to call your attention to the accompanying report from the Secretary of War. Besides the present state of the war which has so long afflicted the Territory of Florida, and the various other matters of interest therein referred to, you will learn from it that the Secretary has instituted an inquiry into abuses, which promises to develop gross enormities in connection with Indian treaties which have been negotiated, as well as in the expenditures for the removal and subsistence of the Indians. He represents also other irregularities of a serious nature that have grown up in the practice of the Indian Department, which will require the appropriation of upward of two hundred thousand dollars to correct, and which claim the immediate attention of Congress.

In reflecting on the proper means of defending the country, we can not shut our eyes to the consequences which the introduction and use of the power of steam upon the ocean are likely to produce in wars between maritime States. We can not yet see the extent to which this power may be applied in belligerent operations, connecting itself as it does with recent improvements in the science of gunnery and projectiles; but we need have no fear of being left, in regard to these things, behind the most active and skillful of other nations, if the genius and enterprise of our fellow-citizens receive proper encouragement and direction from Government.

True wisdom would nevertheless seem to dictate the necessity of placing in perfect condition those fortifications which are designed for the protection of our principal cities and roadsteads. For the defense of our extended maritime coast, our

chief reliance should be placed on our Navy, aided by those inventions which are destined to recommend themselves to public adoption; but no time should be lost in placing our principal cities on the sea-board and the lakes in a state of entire security from foreign assault. Separated as we are from the countries of the Old World, and in much unaffected by their policy, we are happily relieved from the necessity of maintaining large standing armies in times of peace. The policy which was adopted by Mr. Monroe, shortly after the conclusion of the late war with Great Britain, of preserving a regularly organized staff, sufficient for the command of a large military force, should the necessity for one arise, is founded as well in economy as in true wisdom. Provision is thus made, upon filling up the rank and file, which can readily be done on any emergency, for the introduction of a system of discipline both promptly and efficiently. All that is required in time of peace is to maintain a sufficient number of men to guard our fortifications, to meet any sudden contingency, and to encounter the first shock of war. Our chief reliance must be placed on the militia; they constitute the great body of national guards, and, inspired by an ardent love of country, will be found ready at all times, and at all seasons, to repair with alacrity to its defense. It will be regarded by Congress, I doubt not, at a suitable time, as one of its highest duties, to attend to their complete organization and discipline.

The state of the Navy Pension-fund requires the immediate attention of Congress. By the operation of the act of the 3d of March, 1837, entitled "An act for the more equitable administration of the Navy Pension-fund," that fund has been exhausted. It will be seen from the accompanying report of the Commissioner of Pensions that there will be required for the payment of Navy pensions, on the 1st of July next, eighty-four thousand and six dollars and six cents; and on the 1st of January, 1842, the sum of sixty thousand dollars. In addition to these sums, about six thousand dollars will be required to pay the arrears of pensions, which will probably be allowed between the 1st of July and the 1st of January, 1842, making in the whole one hundred and fifty thousand and six dollars six and one-third cents. To meet these payments there is,

within the control of the Department, the sum of twenty-eight thousand and forty dollars, leaving a deficiency of one hundred and twenty-one thousand nine hundred and sixty-six dollars and six and one-third cents. The public faith requires that immediate provision should be made for the payment of these sums.

In order to introduce into the navy a desirable efficiency, a new system of accountability may be found to be indispensably necessary. To mature a plan having for its object the accomplishment of an end so important, and to meet the just expectations of the country, requires more time than has yet been allowed to the Secretary at the head of the Department. The hope is indulged that, by the time of your next regular session, measures of importance in connection with this branch of the public service may be matured for your consideration.

Although the laws regulating the Post-office Department only require from the officer charged with its direction to report at the usual annual session of Congress, the Postmaster-General has presented to me some facts connected with the financial condition of the Department, which are deemed worthy the attention of Congress. By the accompanying report of that officer it appears that the existing liabilities of that Department, beyond the means of payment at its command, can not be less than five hundred thousand dollars. As the laws organizing that branch of the public service confine the expenditure to its own revenues, deficiencies therein can not be presented under the usual estimate for the expenses of Government. It must, therefore, be left to Congress to determine whether the moneys now due to contractors shall be paid from the public treasury, or whether that Department shall continue under its present embarrassments. It will be seen by the report of the Postmaster-General that the recent lettings of contracts in several of the States have been made at such reduced rates of compensation as to encourage the belief that, if the Department was relieved from existing difficulties, its future operations might be conducted without any further call upon the general treasury.

The power of appointing to office is one of a character the most delicate and responsible. The appointing power is ever-

more exposed to be led into error. With anxious solicitude to select the most trustworthy for official station, I can not be supposed to possess a personal knowledge of the qualifications of every applicant. I deem it, therefore, proper in this most public manner, to invite on the part of the Senate a just scrutiny into the character and pretensions of every person whom I may bring to their notice in the regular form of a nomination for office. Unless persons every way trustworthy are employed in the public service, corruption and irregularity will inevitably follow. I shall with the greatest cheerfulness acquiesce in the decision of that body; and regarding it as wisely constituted to aid the Executive Department in the performance of this delicate duty, I shall look to its "consent and advice" as given only in furtherance of the best interests of the country. I shall also, at the earliest proper occasion, invite the attention of Congress to such measures as, in my judgment, will be best calculated to regulate and control the Executive power in reference to this vitally important subject.

I shall also, at the proper season, invite your attention to the statutory enactments for the suppression of the slave-trade, which may require to be rendered more efficient in their provisions. There is reason to believe that the traffic is on the increase. Whether such increase is to be ascribed to the abolition of slave-labor in the British possessions in our vicinity, and an attendant diminution in the supply of those articles which enter into the general consumption of the world, thereby augmenting the demand from other quarters, and thus calling for additional labor, it were needless to inquire. The highest considerations of public honor, as well as the strongest promptings of humanity, require a resort to the most vigorous efforts to suppress the trade.

In conclusion, I beg to invite your particular attention to the interests of this District; nor do I doubt but that, in a liberal spirit of legislation, you will seek to advance its commercial as well as its local interests. Should Congress deem it its duty to repeal the existing Sub-Treasury law, the necessity of providing a suitable place of deposit for the public moneys which may be required within the District must be apparent to all.

I have felt it due to the country to present the foregoing topics to your consideration and reflection. Others with which it might not seem proper to trouble you at an extraordinary session will be laid before you at a future day. I am happy in committing the important affairs of the country into your hands. The tendency of public sentiment, I am pleased to believe, is toward the adoption, in a spirit of union and harmony, of such measures as will fortify the public interests. To cherish such a tendency of public opinion is the task of an elevated patriotism. That differences of opinion as to the means of accomplishing these desirable objects should exist, is reasonably to be expected. Nor can all be made satisfied with any system of measures; but I flatter myself with the hope that the great body of the people will readily unite in support of those whose efforts spring from a disinterested desire to promote their happiness, to preserve the Federal and State Governments within their respective orbits, to cultivate peace with all the nations of the earth on just and honorable grounds, to exact obedience to the laws, to intrench liberty and property in full security, and, consulting the most rigid economy, to abolish all useless expenses.

It is quite evident from this message that there would not have been an extra session of Congress had Mr. Tyler been consulted. Many of the Democrats objected to his recommendation as to aid for the family of General Harrison, but on Constitutional and politic grounds. By the warmth used in speaking of his early opportunity to meet the representatives of the people, it does not appear that President Tyler felt any great anxiety or doubt as to his chances of harmony with Congress. His message seemed to be more a Whig document than otherwise. While recommending a distribution of the proceeds of the public lands among the States for the payment of their debts and establishing their credit, he

repudiated the idea of assuming the debts of States. The virtue and philosophy of this State-Rights reasoning was not clear even then, and did not go unnoticed. The main point, perhaps, in this message was its position as to a bank. It was well known that the Whigs would at once tackle this subject, and it is clear that the message presents two contrary views of the case. By one the President favors a bank, and by the other he evidently proclaims his adherence to the known principles of his life. The message simply shows what everything else President Tyler had done showed—a vain effort to accommodate the Whigs, to maintain harmony between himself and those who had been mainly instrumental in electing him to the Vice-Presidency. The general tone of the message cast some of the Democrats into great dejection. They were not able to see in it even ordinary signs of comfort to them. On the whole, however, it was well received throughout the Nation.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE—THE CONTEST BETWEEN
MR. TYLER AND THE WHIGS—THE BANK VETOES.

THE Whigs, with Mr. Clay at the head, immediately went to work to carry out their scheme for a bank. Whether they doubted that the President would sign a bill providing for a bank or not, they meant to push forward. His predilections were not so much at stake as their announced purposes and promises. This rather ambiguous message distinctly enough, perhaps, conveys the assurance that Mr. Tyler could never be depended upon by the supporters of a bank under the patronage of the Government, and as its agent, and that he never would sign a law to establish one. In promising to concur with Congress in the establishment of some fiscal system, he hoped that body would devise one which should not conflict with his known principles. This whole message hung on this very point; and in order to forewarn against the chances of its being lost sight of he distinctly announced his reservation of the power to reject any measure that would, according to his judgment, conflict with the Constitution. The Secretary of the Treasury was called upon by the Senate to present a plan for a bank, which he did on the 12th of June, and accom-

panying it with a bill for "The Fiscal Bank of the United States."

In the report of the Secretary of the Treasury, sent in to Congress with the President's Message, Mr. Ewing had earnestly urged the necessity of establishing a bank, and to this the President had called the attention of Congress. Writing of the evidences then existing as to the manner in which Mr. Tyler had committed himself to a bank one of the fiercely discontented Whigs says:—

"I have hinted before that the President had two special organs of his opinions. One was the avowed official paper of the Administration, 'The Madisonian.' This paper was conducted by an obsequious friend; it was supported, in great part, by Government favor; the editorial matter was altogether responsive to the President's suggestions; was even inspected and revised before publication, whenever it was thought necessary, by the President or some of his family.

"The other was a less official, but not a less genuine, organ. It was, moreover, personal to the President, having little to say for his Cabinet, much often to say against them; a back-stair confidant, and therefore much more authentic on the topic of the influences that belonged to that region. It told secrets where there was a purpose in having such divulged. It could be repudiated when a hit failed or did mischief; acknowledged when the hit took effect. It was, in short, that kind of organ which history shows us to be both common and useful in the affairs of great men. This organ was found in the correspondent of the 'New York Herald,' a familiar Scapin about the President's household. He was the collector of gossip, and haberdasher of the wit of the White House; a regular frequenter of the garden and of the levees, where he

made notes for frivolous flatteries, and described the court paragons, never forgetting the President himself, in mawkish bombast; and said ill-natured things of such as fell not within the category of court favor. He was purveyor-general to the domestic vanities. It was his vocation to pick up and sift all the current glorifications of Mr. Tyler and his household, which were dropped by the wayside, or which were laid in the path of this assiduous functionary, on purpose to be picked up by those who had some personal motive to flatter. The zeal and ability with which he performed these offices made him a favorite, and, in various by-ways, gave him access to many State secrets; whereby he had a knack of predicting the President's opinions and meditated acts with wonderful precision, before they were made known through any other channel. His letter was always an infallible index to the coming message. If any one is anxious to learn what was concocted in the White House during the extra session, or desires to know how the President lived; what were his habits; what he thought, said, and did, or how he looked, let him resort to the correspondence of the 'Herald!'

"These are the two organs whose testimony I find occasion, in the first place, to employ. I have other witnesses—graver, but not more authentic.

"Letter-writer Scapin, as early as April 20th, which was only a fortnight after Mr. Tyler made his Inaugural Address, not quite a fortnight, and full forty days before the extra session, blurts out (very indiscreetly, we must say now) a piece of intelligence regarding the Bank. It would, doubtless, have cost him his place if the President had then foreseen how very deep was the faith of the Nation in his known abhorrence of a bank, and how shockingly ungrateful the Democracy have become in refusing to trust one so distinguished for this aversion.

"I quote this intelligence in Scapin's own words: 'A letter has been received from Mr. Rives, in which he

expresses his decided approbation of the tone and doctrines of President Tyler's address to the people, and pledges himself, unequivocally, to the support of the principles of Mr. Tyler and his Administration. This is regarded as decisive of the charter of a national bank. Mr. Rives's vote renders such a result certain. The message is to be confined to a full exposition of the affairs of the Nation, the situation of the Treasury, the state of the currency, foreign relations, and such other topics as are ordinarily discussed in papers of the kind, without suggesting any specific plan or any measures for the relief of the people. All this is to be left to Congress. The Secretary of the Treasury has nearly completed his project for a bank, but its features have not yet transpired.'"

This passage is worthy of notice for one thing at least. Ever since the foundation of the Federal Government there have been "organs," from one to scores of newspapers, devoted especially to extravagant eulogy of everything occurring at the President's, and which have been especially favored with all the President's designs and wants. Swarms of reporters and "special correspondents," constituting an army of detectives, if not anything worse, have all the way down to the present day watched the White House, lying in wait for an event, for flattery and influence, for gossip, and to illustrate a "nose for news," or a pretense to distinguished favor. To some extent the very air and manner of the Capital beget this contemptible and unfortunate disposition. You can hardly meet a man, especially a non-resident, who has not been to see the President, and who has not had something committed to him of

vital importance, or who has not received some special attention, or been very definitely "snubbed," in his own imagination. In Washington City, White House gossip has been a disease among both men and women, from "Lady Washington" to R. B. Hayes. The accomplished correspondent attributed the grease-spot on the wall in the courtly, ceremonious days of Washington to the lard on the head of the dirty Democrat; by him the country was taught to believe that the most wonderful, fascinating, and exemplary woman who ever "graced the Executive mansion" was Mrs. Hayes. Even James Buchanan, who was not married, had a veritable queen for his house mistress. Mr. Van Buren was a model of Presidential perfection, and Abraham Lincoln's wife made glorious the sun of his house. President Hayes and his good wife had hardly got out of the White House, and turned their faces towards the shrine to be set up at Fremont, until the knowing correspondent found out that by far the most accomplished and scholarly woman, at least, who had ever dwelt in the White House was Mrs. James A. Garfield.

Every Administration has been supreme and most lovely somewhere, if not in all its parts and appurtenances; and yet no man who reads to-day can declare, under oath, that he has ever confided with childlike simplicity in one of all these statements as to the President's intentions, or the imaginary excellencies or deformities of the White House. Mr. Tyler and his family suffered greatly from

White House leakage. Nor was the blame all on the side of the correspondents. Indiscreet friends of the President and his family, and, it is claimed, even members of his family, thinking the peculiar circumstances demanded it, were led into cultivating newspaper toadyism, or, at least, not frowning it down.

Although Mr. Tyler advanced no financial plan in his message, he had one, but not very fully matured. Yet it was made known to Mr. Ewing; and Henry A. Wise, who was the first friend of the President, says, in his "Seven Decades," that it was "a measure which, while restricted to the special purposes of the fisc, would, without being a bank with power of discount, regulate the exchange, check the over-issuing of the State banking-system, regulate currency, and protect the public credit and finances and revenue against the dreaded fluctuations and shocks of the money market and of commerce; and this plan was within the powers expressly granted of coining money and regulating the value thereof, and of regulating commerce between the United States and foreign nations, and between the several States. In a word, his idea was that of an exchequer, of purely governmental use and purpose of the fisc and of the revenue, incidentally only regulating the standard of value for private and individual trade and commerce."

The President freely and fully conversed with Mr. Ewing as to his ideas, so far as they were developed; and Mr. Ewing's bill went to Congress with less that was objectionable to Mr. Tyler than

any other ever presented on the vexed question. Of course Mr. Clay was the leader on the Whig side in Congress, and had his plan of operations, the first item of which was the repeal of the Sub-Treasury. On the second day of the session a select committee, with Mr. Clay as its chairman, was appointed on the Financial or Bank Bill. The Sub-Treasury Act was repealed in June, by a vote of twenty-nine to eighteen in the Senate, and one hundred and thirty-four to eighty-seven in the House.

In his final argument against this step Mr. Benton took occasion to say:—

“A national bank is to be established, not even a simple and strong bank like that of General Hamilton, but some monstrous compound, born of hell and chaos, more odious, dangerous, and terrible than any simple bank could be. Posterity is to be manacled, and delivered up in chains to this deformed monster; and by whom? . . . Am I to submit to such work? No, never! I will war against the bank you may establish, whether a simple or a compound monster; I will war against it by every means known to the Constitution and the laws. I will vote for the repeal of its charter, as General Harrison and others voted for the repeal of the late bank charter in 1819. I will promote *quo warrantos* and *scire-facias* against it. I will oppose its friends and support its enemies, and work at its destruction in every legal and Constitutional way. I will war upon it while I have breath; and if I incur political extinction in the contest, I shall consider my political life well sold—sold for a high price—when lost in such a cause.”

On the 28th of July the Senate, by a vote of twenty-six to twenty-three, passed the Bank Bill.

On the 6th of August the House gave its assent to the measure in a vote of one hundred and twenty-eight to ninety-seven. Although this bill contained the main conditions of the one proposed by the Secretary of the Treasury, it was shorn of some of its features, and was not very satisfactory generally, even to its friends. But on this measure the Whig leaders were staking everything. This was the vital business of the session, and mainly that for which it had been called. While the bill was only substantially that proposed by Mr. Ewing, which was known to be without the President's full sanction, there was still some effort on the part of the impatient managers to accommodate what were understood to be Mr. Tyler's peculiar notions, and especially were there some very frivolous attempts made towards the selection of a title for the bill, conveying more the idea of treating with a whimsical child than the intelligent head of the Government. On the 16th of August the President returned the bill with his veto, closing with these words:—

“I regard the bill as asserting for Congress the right to incorporate a United States Bank with power and right to establish offices of discount and deposit in the several States of this Union with or without their consent, a principle to which I have always heretofore been opposed, and which can never obtain my sanction. And waiving all the other considerations growing out of its other provisions, I return it to the House, in which it originated, with these my objections to its approval.”

The Whigs throughout the country were, perhaps justly, somewhat surprised at this turn in affairs, but

most of the leaders expected nothing else. Mr. Ewing was not in the least surprised. He did not hope that the President would sign a bill which was so much changed from the one presented to Congress through him, and to which he believed the President was committed. Any one can see from this veto message that the State-Rights feature of Mr. Tyler's objection was, to a great extent, pretense, evasion, temporizing, and that he had no notion of giving his sanction to a bank, and that in the end his attachment to his principles would always outweigh the chance by which he had become Whig Vice-President. While the Whigs undoubtedly had good grounds for the complaint they were in no wise slow to express, in season and out of season, against Mr. Tyler, his case was unfortunate, and not without palliating circumstances. According to the statement of John Minor Botts, however, Mr. Tyler had declared, among various other things more or less confidential, about the time of his inauguration as Vice-President, that if the success of a bank measure depended upon his vote, he should distinguish between being a representative of Virginia and his broader representation of the Nation, and would sustain a bill to that effect. This was, indeed, a novel attitude for John Tyler. Some of Mr. Botts's statements shall be given hereafter in his own language; but, notwithstanding the high character of this Virginia Whig, there must really be some allowance made for his statements, as he was, at the time of uttering them, both a disappointed Whig and a personal enemy of

Mr. Tyler. The fact that any man is susceptible of becoming a personal enemy of another invalidates or weakens his public credence.

Mr. Clay and others now prepared for an assault upon the President, but at the same time the Whigs, aroused to the dangers of the situation, made an effort to reconcile and compromise matters with Mr. Tyler. William C. Rives who belonged to the great Whig opposition in the election of 1840, but who now defended Mr. Tyler's veto, came forward with a plan of a bank, which at first struck the President as the way out of the difficulty. A Congressional Committee also visited him, and undoubtedly earnest exertions were made in various directions to satisfy the President. It was still the belief of many that some arrangement could be made which would prevent a final rupture between the President and the Whigs. On the very day on which Mr. Tyler vetoed the first bill Mr. Botts gave birth to this remarkable letter:—

“AUGUST 16, 1841.

“DEAR SIR,—The President has finally resolved to veto the Bank Bill. It will be sent in to-day at twelve o'clock. It is impossible to tell precisely on what ground it will be placed. He has turned and twisted, and changed his ground so often in his conversations, that it is difficult to conjecture which of the absurdities he will rest his veto upon.

“In the last conversation reported, he said his only objection was to that provision which presumed the assent of the States when no opinion was expressed, and if that was struck out, he would sign the bill. He had no objection to the location of branches by the directors, in

the absence of dissent expressed, but whenever it was expressed, the power to discount promissory notes must cease, although the agency might continue, for the purchase and sale of foreign exchange. However, you will see the message.

"Our Captain Tyler is making a desperate effort to set himself up with the Locofocos, but he'll be headed yet, and I regret to say, it will end badly for him. He will be an object of execration with both parties; with the one for vetoing our bill, which was bad enough—with the other, for signing a worse one; but he is hardly entitled to sympathy. He has refused to listen to the admonition and entreaties of his best friends, and listened only to the whisperings of ambitious and designing mischief-makers who have collected around him.

"The veto will be received without a word, laid on the table, and ordered to be printed. To-night we must and will settle matters, as quietly as possible, but they must be settled. Yours, etc., JOHN M. BOTTS."

This is not a pretty letter, and withal has about it that air of compulsion which was fast widening the gap between the Executive and the Whigs. In view of negotiations with the President, Mr. Clay postponed his attack upon the veto. A new bill, or the old one changed to suit Mr. Tyler, as was supposed, was speedily arranged. As a preliminary step to its construction on the day the first veto was sent to Congress, Alexander H. Stuart, of Virginia, called on the President; and of the interview he made this statement:—

"After the adjournment of the House (on the 16th of August), Mr. Pearce of Maryland (then a Representative in Congress, now a Senator) called at my boarding-house,

and informed me that he was induced to believe that there was still some hope of compromising the difficulties between Congress and the President, by adopting a bank bill on the basis of a proposition which had been submitted by Mr. Bayard (Richard H.) in the Senate, modified so as to leave out the last clause which authorized the conversion of the agencies into offices of discount and deposit on certain contingencies. He produced to me a portion of the Senate journal, containing that proposition, with the obnoxious clause crossed out with ink; and requested me to visit the President and see if we could not adjust the difficulty. At first I declined, but at length yielded to his desire, and promised to do so. About five o'clock I drove to the President's house, but found him engaged with a distinguished Democratic Senator. This I thought rather a bad omen; but I made known my wish for a private audience, which in a few minutes was granted. This was the first occasion on which I had ventured to approach the President on the subject. I made known to him at once the object of my visit, and expressed the hope that some measure might be adopted to heal the division between himself and the Whig party in Congress. I informed him of the existence of the committee to which I referred, and mentioned the names of those who composed it, and relied on their age and known character for prudence and moderation, as the best guarantees of the conciliatory spirit of the Whig party in Congress. He seemed to meet me in the proper temper, and expressed the belief that a fair ground of compromise might yet be agreed upon. I then made known what I had heard of his opinions in regard to Mr. Bayard's proposition. He asked me if I had it with me? I replied in the affirmative, and produced the paper, which had been given to me by Mr. Pearce with the clause struck out, as above stated. He read it over carefully, and said it would do, making no objection whatever to the clause in regard to the estab-

lishment of agencies in the several States without their assent. But he said the capital was too large, and referred to Mr. Appleton and Mr. Jaudon as authority to prove that ten or fifteen millions would be enough. I objected that it might hereafter be found insufficient; and as the charter had twenty years to run, it might be as well to provide against a contingency which would leave the Government dependent on the bank for permission to enlarge the capital; and to obviate the difficulty, I suggested the propriety of giving to Congress the power to increase it as the public exigencies should require. To this he assented; and by his direction I made the note on the margin of the paper: 'Capital to be fifteen millions of dollars—to be increased at the option of Congress when public interests require.' The President then said: 'Now if you will send me this bill I will sign it in twenty-four hours.' After informing the President that there was a statute in Virginia against establishing agencies of foreign banks in the State, he said, 'This must be provided for;' and he then took the paper and wrote on the margin the following words, which were to come in after the word 'or,' and before the word 'bank' in the first line of the proposition of Mr. Bayard (the blank line in this paper), 'In case such agencies are forbidden by the laws of the State.' I remonstrated against this addition as unnecessary, and not meeting the objection; but he said: 'Let it stand for the present; I will think about it.' The President then instructed me to go to Mr. Webster and have the bill prepared at once; and as I rose to leave him, after cautioning me not to expose him to the charge of dictating to Congress, he held my right hand in his left, and raising his right hand upward, exclaimed with much feeling: 'Stuart, if you can be instrumental in passing this bill through Congress, I will esteem you the best friend I have on earth.' . . .

"Upon leaving the President, I took a hack and drove

immediately to Mr. Webster's lodgings, which were at the opposite end of the city, but, unfortunately, he was not at home. I then returned to my boarding-house, where I told what had transpired to my messmates, Mr. Summers and others. After tea I went to the meeting of the joint committee, of which I have already spoken. I there communicated to Mr. Sergeant, before the committee was called to order, what had occurred between the President and myself. When the committee was first organized there was a good deal of excitement and difference of opinion; and an animated debate ensued on various propositions which were submitted. Finally, I was invited by Mr. Sergeant to state to the committee what had passed between the President and myself; which I did, accompanied by such remarks as I thought would have a tendency to allay excitement, and lead to wise and dispassionate conclusions. After much deliberation, the committee concluded to recommend to the Whig party, in both Houses of Congress, to accede to the President's views. A difficulty was then suggested, that the veto message had been made the order of the day at noon, and Mr. Clay had the floor; and it was supposed that the debate might possibly assume such a character as to defeat our purposes of conciliation. Mr. Mangum at once pledged himself that Mr. Clay should offer no obstacle to the adjustment of our difficulties; and engaged to obtain his assent to the postponement of the orders of the day, until we should have an opportunity of reporting to a general meeting of the Whig party, and ascertaining whether they would be willing to accept a bank on the basis agreed on by Mr. Tyler and myself; with this understanding the committee adjourned. On the next day (17th of August) Mr. Mangum, with Mr. Clay's assent, moved the postponement of the discussion of the veto, and it was agreed to (see Senate Journal, page 170); and, on the 18th of August the subject was again, with

Mr. Clay's concurrence, postponed on the motion of Mr. Berrien. (Senate Journal, page 173.) During this time the Whigs held their general meeting, and agreed to adopt a bill on the President's plan ; and Mr. Sergeant and Mr. Berrien were requested to see that it was properly drawn ; and, if necessary, to seek an interview with the President, to be certain that there was no misunderstanding as to his opinions. From this statement, confirmed by the journals of the Senate, it will be seen with how much truth Mr. Tyler has charged Mr. Clay with an intolerant and dictatorial spirit, and a settled purpose to embarrass his Administration. So far from such being the fact, I state upon my own personal knowledge that Mr. Clay made every sacrifice, consistent with honor and patriotism, to avoid a rupture with Mr. Tyler. The result of the labors of Messrs. Sergeant and Berrien was the second Bank Bill, which these distinguished jurists supposed to be in conformity with the President's views."

Mr. Sergeant and Mr. Berrien brought forward the bill without delay, with the ridiculous title, "An Act to provide for the better collection, safe-keeping, and disbursement of the public revenue by means of a corporation to be styled the 'Fiscal Corporation of the United States.'" This very title produced laughter and disgust in both Houses, as it well should have done, and the discussion that followed was, to some extent, in the same vein. On the 23d of August the bill passed in the House by a vote of one hundred and twenty-five to ninety-four, and without alteration, on the 3d of September, by a vote of twenty-seven to twenty-two in the Senate.

On the 9th the President vetoed this bill. The message returning the bill was prepared by one

of his private council, and little altered afterwards by him. It was likewise submitted to his Cabinet proper, as the first one had been. His first veto message was also prepared by himself without consulting his Cabinet. This treatment of his accepted advisers was, perhaps, unavoidable under the circumstances, but it could not be otherwise than humiliating and insulting to them; and, in itself, was sufficient grounds for their immediate resignation, with no more ceremony than the case required.

In the meantime Mr. Clay had let himself off in the Senate, on account of the first veto. The Democrats were in spasms of delight. Even Mr. Benton who had wildly declared that this bank scheme came from hell and chaos, now threatened Congress with "Tyler too."

A crisis had evidently been reached in the affairs of the Administration. On the 11th of September all the members of the Cabinet, except Mr. Webster, sent to the President their resignations. Mr. Berrien also came forward with this statement to the public:—

"When the bill for the establishment of a fiscal agent, which had been reported by Mr. Clay, had been returned with the veto of the President, I was requested to unite with Mr. Sergeant in preparing and reporting a bill to establish a bank on the basis of the *projet* submitted to the Senate by Mr. Ewing, or such other bill as we believed could become a law. The alternative authority was given expressly with a view to enable us to ascertain, with more precision than was found in the veto message, in what particular form the President would feel authorized to

approve such a bill; and the whole power was conferred and received in a spirit of conciliation to the Executive, and from an earnest desire on the part of the majority in Congress to co-operate with the President in the adoption of some fiscal agent which should meet the wishes and the wants of the country. Mr. Sergeant and I waited on the President, and, at my request, Mr. W. C. Dawson accompanied us.

"It is not proposed to detail the particulars of the conversation at this interview, unless it shall be desired by some one who has the authority of the President for asking it. It suffices to state the result. The President, referring to his veto message, expressed himself in favor of a fiscal agent divested of the discounting power, and limited to dealing in bills of exchange other than those drawn by one citizen of a State upon another citizen of the same State. He declared his determination to confer with his Cabinet on the question whether the assent of the States ought to be required in the establishment of the agencies to be employed by the corporation, and also as to the propriety of holding with us that informal communication, promising to inform us of the result by a note to be sent in the course of the day. In the course of the same day Mr. Webster came to the Capitol, with instructions, as he stated, to communicate to me verbally the determination of the President, he (the President) believing that that mode of communication would be equally acceptable with the written one that had been promised. He proceeded to state that the President would approve a bill for the establishment of a fiscal agency limited to dealing in foreign bills of exchange. And to the question whether he would require that the assent of the States should be obtained for the establishment of the agencies to be employed by the corporation, he answered that he would not. He suggested the expediency of changing the name of the corporation, which was acquiesced in; and by an arrangement

then made with Mr. Webster, I received Mr. Ewing and Mr. Sergeant at my lodgings at five o'clock of the same afternoon. The details of the bill, subsequently introduced by Mr. Sergeant, were then and there agreed upon, in conformity with the views of the President, as communicated to me by Mr. Webster, and repeated by Mr. Ewing; and in reply to the question also proposed to Mr. Ewing, whether the President would require the assent of the States to the establishment of the agencies, he, Mr. Ewing, likewise replied in the negative. The sketch thus arranged was committed to Mr. Sergeant, who prepared from it the bill which he subsequently introduced in the House of Representatives, a copy of which was, as I understood from Mr. Sergeant, before introducing it, sent to Mr. Webster to be by him submitted to the President. This was the same bill which subsequently passed both Houses of Congress, and which was returned by the President with his second veto.

“J. MACPHERSON BERRIEN.”

CHAPTER IX.

WHO STARTED THE FIGHT?—WHERE WAS THE FAULT?—
PRESIDENT TYLER AND THE WHIGS—
A KITCHEN CABINET.

TWO days after the resignation of the other members of the Cabinet the following statement was made public by Mr. Webster :—

“Lest any misapprehension should exist as to the reasons which have led me to differ from the course pursued by my late colleagues, I wish to say that I remain in my place, first, because I have seen no sufficient reasons for the dissolution of the late Cabinet by the voluntary act of its own members. I am perfectly persuaded of the absolute necessity of an institution, under the authority of Congress, to aid revenue and financial operations, and to give the country the blessings of a good currency and cheap exchanges. Notwithstanding what has passed, I have confidence that the President will co-operate with the Legislature in overcoming all difficulties in the attainment of these objects; and it is to the union of the Whig party—by which I mean the whole party, the Whig President, the Whig Congress, and the Whig people—that I look for a realization of our wishes. I can look nowhere else. In the second place, if I had seen reasons to resign my office I should not have done so without giving the President reasonable notice, and affording him time to select the hands to which he should confide the delicate and important affairs now pending in this Department.”

Two reasons, at least, were concerned in the step taken by the Cabinet, beyond the action of the President in relation to the bank. These were the pressure of Mr. Clay and other leading Whigs, and indiscreet and insulting letters in a newspaper ("The New York Herald and Enquirer"), supposed to be the especial mouth-piece of the President and his family. To this paper Mr. Ewing's letter of resignation does ample justice. Reference has before been made to the letters written to the newspapers esteemed the especial organs of Mr. Tyler.

While this paper "of a neighboring city" considered itself fortunate in its privileges for furthering its profession, the collection and dissemination of "news," gossip, and slander, and was hardly deserving of the reputation Mr. Ewing gave it, somebody was exceedingly culpable. Mr. Webster was of the opinion that some of the President's sons, or some member of his family, was the culprit in the case. However this may be, besides the wrong contained in the familiar communications from the White House, or the admission of the reporter behind the scenes, the whole affair was in bad taste, and, instead of furthering, materially damaged Mr. Tyler's interests. Many of the Whig leaders not only asked the resignation of the Cabinet, but, at a meeting held by all the members except Mr. Webster, to determine upon a course of action, Mr. Clay was present, by whose authority it is not perceivable, and simply demanded the resignations. Mr. Webster was not in the Clay interest, and hence he

did not resign. But there is no doubt it was understood that he should quit Mr. Tyler with the other members of the Cabinet. Nor did he go contrary to this understanding until he had consulted the Congressmen from New England, or at least from Massachusetts, who, not even excepting John Quincy Adams, advised him to retain his position. These letters of resignation, together with other things, if not alone, seem pretty clearly to establish the fact that Mr. Tyler did at the outset design sanctioning a bank bill.

The following extract from "The Herald" letter of the 6th of September, which was most objectionable at this juncture as bearing on the Cabinet, may be of interest here, and will serve to aid the reader in judging how far Mr. Tyler was amenable to the charge of pursuing this underhanded and unmanly way of getting rid of Cabinet ministers with whom it was quite certain all chances of harmony were gone :—

"The Bank Bill will be returned on Wednesday or Thursday, with a veto message, to the House of Representatives, where the bill originated. The Clay men have held a caucus, and decided that it will be best to receive the message without any particular demonstrations of hostility to the President. Their animosity has cooled down to a calculation of chances. They think it wiser to receive the message with some deference to the character and position of the President, by which course of proceeding it is hoped a dissolution of the Cabinet may be prevented. In this way they propose respectively to return to their constituents, and, by a common movement, arouse the people

against Mr. Tyler, while they are still in league with the Cabinet. They are to return to the siege in the shape of indignation meetings, newspaper denunciation, and other affiliated hostile movements extending all over the country, while in the interval of a calm of a few weeks it is hoped the President will, in his great good nature, confide the keys of the fortress to their allies and his secret enemies.

“Were the Clay men to denounce the President just now, it might lead to an immediate breaking up of the Cabinet, and these magnanimous gentlemen might lose all future chance of getting offices. The Cabinet, one and all, are hard at work to allay all open evidences of a rupture, and counseling their friends to go home and raise the standard of revolt there, while their own efforts are directed to undermine and circumvent the President here. This is their game. Who would have believed that high-minded and honorable men, for such members of the Cabinet ought to be, would thus concert a system of party movement, by which to destroy the very man at whose will they hold their offices, and who is Constitutionally responsible for all their official acts? What treachery! What ingratitude! Why do they not act like men, and at once give in their resignations, and suffer the President to bring to his aid such men as he has confidence in? Nothing can exceed the industry of the President. He rises early and retires late. Every hour of the day is devoted to his duties. He is compelled to look over papers, and decide on a great mass of matters that would be handed over for the action of the Secretaries if they were men really his friends; but he knows full well the secret objects the leading members of his Cabinet have in view, and, of course, he is constrained to do almost everything himself. There is a total absence of all energy in every branch of the Government. The cause of all this is obvious. The President and his Cabinet are mutually mistrustful of each other; there is, there can be, no cordial, confiding co-operation between

them. The Cabinet are playing the game of the President's enemies, and desire nothing so much as his defeat and dishonor. As the thing works now, the President is forced to play into Mr. Clay's or Mr. Webster's hands. The Cabinet know that the President feels this to be his position, and yet they do not, will not, resign. Look at the dictatorial tone and language of the 'Richmond Whig,' the 'Boston Atlas,' the Wall Street press—papers that have always defended Mr. Webster and Mr. Clay. These are the papers which are the most bitter and the most insolent in their attacks upon Mr. Tyler and his friends. Who can doubt that these papers are prompted to the course they pursue by Mr. Webster and Mr. Clay? Mr. Clay is pretty open—he likes a fair fight; but Mr. Webster, who is every inch a coward, stabs the President through friends whom he affects to disavow. Add to this an inordinate love for the honor and emolument of station, and a desire to pervert their official influence to the purposes of selfish aggrandizement hereafter, and you have an explanation of the anomalous circumstance of men of reputation and character holding on to office, while it involves personal degradation, and indicates both a total want of self-respect and what is due to the President of the United States."

As early as the 10th of August this "correspondent" had said:—

"The impression is gaining ground that there must be an entire recomposition of the Cabinet in the event of a veto. Every member, it is understood, lent himself to the views of Mr. Clay, and encouraged the subterfuge which is facetiously called a compromise, and no one of them, therefore, can sustain the President in a veto. Is it not obvious, then, that there must be a dissolution? Up to this morning not one of his Constitutional advisers was apprised of the President's determination about the

Bank Bill. It is apparent, therefore, that there is no cordial understanding between the Executive and his ministry, and a change must come, of course."

That may have been meant to prepare the way, to hurry the event; at least, that the Whigs charged, and truthfully enough, no doubt, although it would not be so easy to decide that even the members of Mr. Tyler's immediate family were the instigators. No matter how all this knowing gossip took its rise, any one must see what effect it would have in time on the relations of the President and his Cabinet.

As to the sincerity of Mr. Tyler's intentions at any time in favor of a bank there were many doubters. Mr. Tyler was honestly and earnestly opposed always to a Bank of the United States; but after he became President, he was as honestly anxious to remain on good terms with the Whigs, and while he appeared to favor this all-important scheme, all-important to the Whigs, he hoped that some event, some chance, would prevent an issue on that point, or give him a popular ground for a veto. As the time approached for the second veto, he became more anxious to avoid a step which, although inevitable, he was desirous of preventing, and freely announced his wish that the bank question might be postponed.

The following letter from Mr. Webster will serve to illustrate the President's condition:—

"GENTLEMEN,—As you spoke last evening of the general policy of the Whigs, under the present posture of affairs, relative to the Bank Bill, I am willing to place you in full possession of my opinion on that subject.

"It is not necessary to go further back into the history of the past than the introduction of the present measure into the House of Representatives.

"That introduction took place within two or three days after the President's disapproval of the former bill; and I have not the slightest doubt that it was honestly and fairly intended as a measure likely to meet the President's approbation. I do not believe that one in fifty of the Whigs had any sinister design whatever, if there was an individual who had such design.

"But I know that the President had been greatly troubled in regard to the former bill, being desirous, on one hand, to meet the wishes of his friends, if he could, and on the other to do justice to his own opinions.

"Having returned this first bill with objections, a new one was presented in the House, and appeared to be making rapid progress.

"I know the President regretted this, and wished the whole subject might have been postponed. At the same time I believed he was disposed to consider calmly and conscientiously whatever other measure might be presented to him. But in the meantime Mr. Botts's very extraordinary letter made its appearance. Mr. Botts is a Whig of eminence and influence in our ranks. I need not recall to your mind the contents of the letter. It is enough to say that it purported that the Whigs designed to circumvent their own President; to 'head him,' as the expression was, and to place him in a condition of embarrassment. From that moment I felt that it was the duty of the Whigs to forbear from pressing the Bank Bill further at the present time. I thought it was but just in them to give decisive proof that they entertained no such purpose as seemed to be imputed to them. And since there was reason to believe that the President would be glad of time for information and reflection before being called on to form an opinion on another plan for a

bank—a plan somewhat new to the country—I thought his known wishes ought to be complied with. I think so still. I think this is a course just to the President, and wise on behalf of the Whig party. A decisive rebuke ought, in my judgment, to be given to the intimation, from whatever quarter, of a disposition among the Whigs, to embarrass the President. This is the main ground of my opinion; and such a rebuke, I think, would be found in the general resolution of the party to postpone further proceedings on the subject to the next session, now only a little more than three months off.

“The session has been fruitful of important acts. The wants of the treasury have been supplied; provisions have been made for fortifications and for the navy; the repeal of the Sub-Treasury has passed; the Bankrupt Bill, that great measure of justice and benevolence, has been carried through; and the Land Bill seems about to receive the sanction of Congress.

“In all these measures, forming a mass of legislation more important, I will venture to say, than all the proceedings of Congress for many years past, the President has cordially concurred.

“I agree that the currency question is, nevertheless, the great question before the country; but considering what has already been accomplished in regard to other things; considering the difference of opinion which exists upon this remaining one; and considering, especially, that it is the duty of the Whigs effectually to repel and put down any supposition that they are endeavoring to put the President in a condition in which he must act under restraint or embarrassment, I am fully and entirely persuaded that the bank subject should be postponed to the next session.”

This letter was dated August 25, 1841, and addressed to the two Senators from Massachusetts

(Choate and Bates). John Quincy Adams shared with Mr. Webster the opinion that the bank question should be dropped after the first veto until the next session of Congress. Mr. Adams believed that the President would veto any bill to establish a bank, and that with the next one the Whig party would lose its power in the Administration.

It was held by some of the friends of Mr. Tyler that Clay and a few Whig leaders started out at the beginning of this Administration to drive Mr. Tyler from the Whig party. And Mr. Gilmer went so far as to say during the bank debate that the Whigs had proscribed both the President and himself. This whole thing was a mere whim, a folly. The time to quarrel with Mr. Tyler was not at the beginning of an Administration from which the Whigs hoped to derive every benefit. The only way to reach these benefits was in preserving friendly relations with the President, who they well knew did not belong to the Whig party farther than in making common cause with it against Jackson and Van Buren. In speaking of this matter Mr. Benton says:—

“Embarrassment is the next part of the offense, and its crowning part, and fails like the other. Mr. Clay had no such design. That is proved by Mr. Stuart, and by his own conduct—twice putting off his speech—holding in his proud spirit until chafed by Mr. Rives—then mollifying indignant language with some expressions of former regard to Mr. Tyler. He had no design or object in embarrassing him. No Whig had. And they all had a life and death interest (political) in conciliating him, and getting him to sign; and did their best to do so. The only

design was to get him to sign his own bill—the fiscal corporation bill—which he had fixed up himself, title and all, sent out his Cabinet to press upon Congress, and desired to have it back in three days, that he might sign it in twenty-four hours. The only solution is, that he did not expect it to come back; that he counted on getting some Whigs turned against it, as tried without avail on Messrs. Choate and Bates; and that he could appease the Whig storm by sending in the bill, and escape the performance of his promise by getting it defeated.”

It was maintained by many of Mr. Tyler's friends, and believed by him, that the bank question was forced upon him, and the vetoes drawn out in order to cripple him politically and drive him from the party. Such an opinion was mere trifling, and its very announcement was injurious to Mr. Tyler's cause. The Whig leaders were too wise and too much devoted to the great object of their existence, that for which General Harrison had been induced to call the extra session, the establishment of a bank, to be guilty of such madness. It was devotion to the bank, and a disregard for Mr. Tyler and everything else that hurled the Whigs along to destruction, even after the first veto should have warned them to come to a halt, and cultivate peaceful relations with the President without whose co-operation they could not pass a law. They wanted to drive Mr. Tyler, it is true, not however, from the party, or into stubborn opposition, but into all their measures; and this they believed they should do since he had been made Vice-President by them, and the moral force of the position would certainly compel him to

follow the lead of the Whig party. But they were mistaken in Mr. Tyler, if they were not also in the matter of the amount of moral obligation by which he was bound to the Whig party.

Mr. Benton, who made it a part of his unsenatorial-like business to throw up "Tyler too" to the Whigs, believed as did others that Mr. Tyler, actuated by what he felt to be his obligations to the Whigs, would have signed a bank bill during the first few days of the special session; but soon a new idea got behind his conduct, and then nothing could have induced him to do such an act. This idea was that it was known to the country that his principles had been opposed to such legislation, that if he would stick to his principles the people would support him, that a President who would do as he deemed right without consulting parties could easily establish himself in the confidence of the people, that he would gain a following which would make him the head of a third party and President in his own right by election in 1844. Long before the bank bill came to him for his veto, this, it was claimed, was the unfortunate position taken by Mr. Tyler. Mr. Wise, one of the confidential advisers of the President, admitted early in the session that if the Clay Whigs were not afraid of Mr. Tyler, they were of Daniel Webster. Whatever were Mr. Tyler's inclinations as to his candidacy for President in 1844, after his final separation from the Whigs, it is quite evident that he was not actuated by such aspirations during the pendency of the bank contest. Here too, his accusers

were at fault. It is certain that Mr. Tyler, with a view of quieting any suspicions the Whigs might have on that point, and hence any feelings of hostility toward him, proposed to his Cabinet to insert a paragraph in his second veto message clearly stating that he had no aspirations to continue in office, and would renounce all pretensions which it was claimed he entertained, and at the end of his term retire from public life. He was unanimously opposed in such a step by his Cabinet ministers, they holding that there was no need or justice in his doing any such thing. But he did put in this message in referring to the institutions of the country this manly declaration: "I shall esteem my efforts to sustain them, even though I perish, more honorable than to win the applause of men by a sacrifice of my duty and of my conscience." This brings to mind the following statement from a very pretentious recent work styled "The Constitutional and Political History of the United States," from the pen of a temporary resident of this country, one of those foreigners endowed with the faculty of knowing more of the United States than its wisest citizens:—

"Tyler had too little firmness of character and too much vanity to be able to face the reproach that he had become unfaithful to his earlier convictions, because he did not dare to defy the Whigs. But it was with him as with a great many others, he admired himself most for those qualities in which he was lacking, strength of character and unselfish devotion to the cause. The fact that the knife was now aimed so directly at his own breast made him obstinate. It not unfrequently happens that vanity

rushes with impatient zeal into resolves before which the lack of moral courage had long hesitated. The thought of looking at himself as the unflinching martyr to firmness of conviction and fidelity to duty was, to a great extent, compensation for the unpleasantness and dangers of the coming storm."

Neither Mr. Tyler's former career nor his dealings with the Whigs at this time justified, in the remotest degree, this charge of lack of moral courage or personal firmness. This unjust and unworthy assumption is extracted from a vast two-volume work, written with much spirit, but which is a rehash of a great deal of history and a vast amount of gossip, hardly a reliable constituent of Constitutional history.

The rupture expected from the death of General Harrison had soon come, and that, too, not by the conduct mainly of Mr. Tyler. There is no evidence that he entered upon the office of President with the desire or design of breaking with the Whigs, and there is, as has been seen, plenty of evidence to show that he greatly desired to postpone the day of calamity to the Whigs. He was elected on the Whig ticket as the representative of the State-Rights and minority wing (Democratic wing) of the opposition to what was termed the "Spoils Administration." The Vice-Presidency was given to this branch of the Whig army, and the question from the day of Harrison's death was as to how far Mr. Tyler would conform to the demands of the majority (the Whigs proper). Some of the Whigs, like John Quincy Adams,

believed nothing should be expected but disappointment to them from Mr. Tyler. Mr. Adams said that "slavery, temperance, land-jobbing, bankruptcy, and sundry controversies with Great Britain constitute the material for the history of John Tyler's Administration." When Mr. Tyler had surprised the Democrats in his first veto, they began to cultivate his smiles. It was said by the Whigs, and even referred to on the floor of the Senate, that on the night of the 16th of August, a great stampede of the Democrats took place towards the White House. From the outset Mr. Tyler had some indiscreet and unwise advisers, and these were finally formed into a kind of "Kitchen Cabinet." From this source little but evil came to him, and certainly no good to the Whig party. The letters of John M. Botts show, at least, the manner in which the Whigs were treating the President. The Democrats, on the other hand, were turning everything to their own advantage. Mr. Webster was not the only member of his party who believed that the Whigs were pressing too hard, and should rest after the first veto. The resignation of the ministers was taken as a movement in support of Mr. Clay. But however much it was that, it was also a necessity on their part. And there is no question as to its being perfectly in harmony with the wishes and necessities of the President.

Hardly had the last veto been acted upon, and the ministers resigned, until the Whigs took the last step necessary to separate them entirely from the

President and any of the benefits they expected from the great victory of 1840. On the 11th of September a very formal meeting of Whig members of both Houses of Congress was held, and a committee appointed of three members from the Senate and five from the House, to draw up an address to the people of the United States. On the 13th the meeting again assembled. The address was received and ordered to be sent out to the people. The paper held, that while the attitude and purposes of the President were plain, the only obligation now resting upon the Whig party was to give the support of all good citizens to the measures of his Administration which were right, and oppose unflinchingly the wrong, an old and ever-current piece of patriotic philosophy.

The impolicy of this pronunciamento, the Whigs never saw, perhaps, although all of them did not subscribe to it. Nor were they willing to admit that the sole cause of the manifesto and rupture was Mr. Tyler's veto of the bank; or indeed that that alone would ever have separated the Whigs from the President. They were not without other grounds of dissatisfaction. One of their writers in speaking for the party, to some extent, said on this point:—

“If he had frankly said that, on this point of the bank, he felt constrained to differ; if he had manfully told those around him, and who had an interest in the success of his Administration, what he could not do, or what he could do; and, above all things, had kept his word; had demeaned himself as an upright, sincere, and earnest magistrate in his high place; had not treasured up against himself such a store of broken promises; had not

so trifled with the capable and honorable men around him; had not thrown himself into such suspicious associations; had not so vibrated between his will to desert and his fear of the event; had not so concealed himself from those who had a right to know his sentiments, and so disclosed himself to those who had no right to his confidence—he might have put his veto upon a bank; he might have asked and obtained delay; he might have disappointed all that eager hope which prevailed in the country for the settlement of the currency—hope that he had himself raised in his Inaugural Address and in his first message—and yet there would have been no rupture, no resignation, no repulse of the President by the majority of Congress.”

On the other hand Mr. Tyler had something besides the bank question to bring against the Whigs. They had not only pressed this matter upon him when he was asking them in every possible way to delay, not to push him too hard, but they had heaped abuses upon him in Congress and out of Congress; had held him up as a traitor to the party; and subsequently, persistently and always, attempted to make his place in the history of the country infamous. Perhaps to Mr. Clay more than any one else Mr. Tyler owed much of the evils of his Administration. Yet they had been, in a sense, personal friends, and possibly even the story of the tears shed by Mr. Tyler at Harrisburg over the defeat of Clay was true. Mr. Tyler never did cease to respect the character of Clay, however little truth there may be in the story of his attachments in 1839 and 1840. Years afterwards, in 1855, in a speech to the Maryland Institute for

the promotion of the Mechanic Arts he spoke thus of Mr. Clay:—

“Over that house, at the time to which I refer, presided one who seemed formed for the station, and the station made for him. To commanding talents he united an urbanity, with a decision of character, which commanded the respect of the House, and awed into subjection to rule the most refractory. He had enlarged his reputation by brilliant efforts on the floor of both Houses of Congress, and his speakership may properly be referred to as a period when to have held a seat in the House of Representatives constituted an epoch in any man’s life. That man was Henry Clay. Let me speak of him in a manner worthy of myself and just to him. He had received the impress in early life of the fervid and glowing eloquence of Mr. Henry, and had profited greatly by it. He was a conspicuous leader of the Republican hosts that had elevated first Mr. Jefferson, and afterwards Mr. Madison to the Presidency, and his voice sounded as a clarion in the ears of their adversaries. Nature had bestowed upon him in profusion her gifts. He added to an intellect of the highest order a commanding person, and his voice and gesture and manner were those best calculated to sway the action of a popular assembly. Had he lived in the time of Pericles his name would have found a place of high eminence in Athenian history.”

In his last great speech, that before the Virginia Secession Convention, Mr. Tyler again referred to Henry Clay in these words, for which he was privately reprimanded by Henry A. Wise:—

“I wish to allude to one man, in this connection, whom you knew, and whom I knew well for the greater portion of my life. I looked upon him almost as the Atlas upon which not only his party, but, in some degree,

his country rested. I knew him in the Senate of the United States, when my solitary vote was given against the Force Bill, during General Jackson's time. He stepped forth on that occasion like a patriot, to heal the discontents of his country and to cicatrize its wounds. It was Henry Clay, sir. I take pleasure in pronouncing his name in this connection. There were afterwards political feuds between us, but it was his loss and not mine. He threw off the hand that would have supported him. He forfeited the assistance of a friend who admired and esteemed him to the close of his life, one who has no hesitation in saying now, as I said upon a recent occasion, that he deserves a monument lofty as the mountains, enduring as the skies, for his great measure of pacification, his famous tariff compromise, which gave peace to the country and bade the raging elements be still."

To the memory of Mr. Clay he was always attached, there can now be no question, and forgave him, like he did all others, for any wrongs done to himself. When the statue of Clay was unveiled at Richmond a few years before, Mr. Tyler, strangely enough, delivered the oration.

CHAPTER X.

THE NEW CABINET—DISAPPOINTMENT ALL AROUND—
WHIG MEASURES SUCCESSFUL—FIRST ANNUAL
MESSAGE.

SEVERAL of the Whigs, constituting what Mr. Clay termed "a corporal's guard," remained faithful to President Tyler. Among these were Caleb Cushing, George H. Proffit, of Indiana; Henry A. Wise, a hybrid in politics; Mr. Gilmer, and W. C. Rives. Mr. Cushing also took it upon himself to issue a manifesto in the shape of an address to his Massachusetts constituents. In this address he said:—

"A caucus dictatorship has been set up in Congress, which, not satisfied with ruling that body to the extinguishment of individual freedom of opinion, seeks to control the President in his proper sphere of duty, denounces him before you for refusing to surrender his independence and his conscience to its decree, and proposes, through subversion of the fundamental provisions and principles of the Constitution, to usurp the command of the Government. It is a question, therefore, in fact, not of legislative measures, but of revolution. What is the visible, and the only professed, origin of these extraordinary movements? The Whig party in Congress have been extremely desirous to cause a law to be enacted at the late session incorporating a national bank. Encountering, in the veto

of the President, a Constitutional obstacle to the enactment of such a law at the late session, a certain portion of the Whig party, represented by the caucus dictatorship, proceeds then, in the beginning, to denounce the President. Will you concur in this denunciation of the President? . . .

"When Lord Grenville broke up the Whig party of England, in 1807, by the unseasonable pressure of some great question, and its consequent loss, 'Why,' said Sheridan, 'did they not put it off, as Fox did? I have heard of men running their heads against a wall; but this is the first time I ever heard of men building a wall, and squaring it, and clamping it, for the express purpose of knocking out their brains against it.' This *bon mot* of Sheridan's will apply to the Whig party in Congress, if, on account of the failure of the Bank Bill at the late session, they secede from the Administration, and set up as a *tertium quid* in the Government neither Administration nor opposition. . . .

"Is it wise for the Whig party to throw away the actuality of power for the current four years? If so, for what object? For some contingent possibility four years hence? If so, what one? Is the contingent possibility of advancing to power four years hence any one particular man in its ranks, whoever he may be, and however eminently deserving, a sufficient object to induce the Whig party to abdicate the power which itself as a body possesses now?

"If so, will its abdication of power now tend to promote that object? Is it not, on the contrary, the very means to make sure the success of some candidate of the Democratic party? . . .

"In refusing to sign those bills, then, he violated no engagement, and committed no act of perfidy in the sense of a forfeited pledge. . . .

"But, in this particular, the President, as an upright man, could do no otherwise than he did. He conscien-

tiously disapproved those bills. And the Constitution, which he was sworn to obey, commands him, expressly and peremptorily commands him, if he do not approve of any bill presented to him for his signature, to return it to the House of Congress in which it originated. 'If he approve, he shall sign it; if not, he shall return it,' are the words of the Constitution. Would you as conscientious men yourselves forbid the President of the United States to have a conscience?"

Of the retiring members of Mr. Tyler's Cabinet a few words may here be said. They were all Whigs, and all in favor of the establishment of a bank under the patronage of the Government, as was Mr. Webster. Ewing, Bell, Granger, and Crittenden had long been in public life, and ranked among the ablest men of the country. Mr. Granger was the son of the old Postmaster-General, Gideon Granger. George E. Badger was a lawyer of North Carolina, standing, with fine talents, at the head of his profession in that State, but had not been much known in general politics.

It had been a strange fancy of the Whigs that Mr. Tyler would have some trouble in organizing a new Cabinet. But they were mistaken, and as agreeably disappointed as the ardor of the Democrats was cooled. Mr. Tyler speedily sent in the names of his new advisers for confirmation by the Senate, as follows: Walter Forward, of Pennsylvania, Secretary of Treasury; John McLean, of Ohio, Secretary of War; Abel P. Upshur, of Virginia, Secretary of Navy; Charles A. Wickliffe, of Kentucky, Postmaster-General; and Hugh S.

Legaré, of South Carolina, as Attorney-General. Mr. McLean declining to resign his seat on the Supreme Bench, John C. Spencer, of New York, was substituted for him in the War Department. These men were all Whigs or Conservatives, had not been much in politics, and altogether the new Cabinet was one in ability and character with which the country could find little fault.

On the 13th of September the extra session came to an end with the following record:—

“The principal acts passed by Congress at the extra session were the following: Authorizing a loan of twelve millions of dollars for the purpose of supplying the wants of the treasury on account of deficiencies during Mr. Van Buren’s Administration; appropriating twenty-five thousand dollars, or one year’s salary of the President, for the relief of Mrs. Harrison, widow of the late President; making appropriations for a home squadron; repealing the Sub-Treasury Act; providing for the payment of navy pensions; establishing a uniform system of bankruptcy; reviving and extending the charters of banks in the District of Columbia; appropriating the proceeds of the sales of the public lands, and to grant pre-emption rights; making appropriations for various fortifications, for ordnance, and for preventing and suppressing Indian hostilities; providing for placing Greenough’s statue of Washington in the rotunda of the Capitol; authorizing the transmission of letters and packets free of postage; and an act relating to duties and drawbacks. The last act was intended to provide for the deficiency of revenue caused by the large number of articles admitted free of duty by the Tariff Law of 1833; on many of those articles a duty of twenty per cent was now laid. The act providing for the distribution of the proceeds of the public lands among the

several States was passed substantially according to the plan proposed by Mr. Clay; but a clause introduced by certain opponents of a protective tariff impaired its efficiency, and in the sequel rendered the law inoperative. The clause referred to provided that when the tariff of duties on imports was raised to a rate above twenty per cent *ad valorem*, the distribution should be suspended until this cause be removed. Twenty-five acts and five joint resolutions were passed at this extra session."

The Bankrupt Bill was sanctioned with no warmth by the President, although he sent in a message recommending it. The exclusive character of the bill he had opposed in 1817, did not attach to this. Mr. Clay and some other Whigs were shy of this bill, and were never pleased with the credit they got for its passage. To all these acts the President gave his assent, and they were substantially Whig measures. The passage of the bill for the relief of the widow of General Harrison, like others, met great opposition from Mr. Benton and other Democrats, not from a disposition against General Harrison or his family, it was claimed, but from the want of authority and the evils that might arise from such a precedent.

The Administrations of General Harrison and Mr. Tyler inherited from Mr. Van Buren the precarious Canadian border difficulty which began in 1837; and besides this, the long-standing North-eastern and North-western border dispute with Great Britain. Mr. Van Buren had acted firmly and wisely in reference to the Canadian rebellion; but the destruction of the *Caroline* and the abduction and murder of some

of her crew by British soldiers in an American port was still in dispute, the British Government neither having offered redress nor assumed the responsibility of the war-like insult to this Nation. One of the supposed perpetrators of the *Caroline* outrage, who from his own untruthful boasting had been arrested, was yet in prison when General Harrison came into office. For some cause the British Ministry had withheld action in the case until the inauguration of the new American Administration. The whole *Caroline* outrage was then assumed as the act of the British Government, and the authorities at Washington at once notified of this step. But fortunately, perhaps, at this very time the British subject long under arrest in New York for complicity in the burning of the *Caroline* was set at liberty, it having been clearly proven that he was nowhere near the scene on the night of the destruction of the vessel. This relieved the complications somewhat. But the British Government never did give clear satisfaction for the murder and abduction of the American citizens. England was in one of her excessively domineering moods, yet she was in no hurry to go to war with the United States, which was apparent enough by her postponing any definite action until the influence of General Jackson was removed from the Administration. But ill-feeling had by no means subsided on the Northern border; and soon after the adjournment of the special session towards the last of September (25th) owing to the hostile proceedings of the members of some kind of anti-Canadian secret

order in New York, Michigan, and Ohio, on the border, Mr. Tyler was driven to issue a proclamation calling for its immediate dispersion. His first annual message gives the necessary additional facts as to this difficulty, springing from a source which will never cease to be the fruitful cause of disturbance until our present relations with Great Britain are changed.

Notwithstanding the outcry about President Tyler's treason to the party, and the continued abuse inconsiderately heaped upon him, the Whigs succeeded during the special session in passing all their measures, land distribution and all, except the great crowning scheme, the Bank. This was certainly not so bad a history for Mr. Tyler so far as the Whigs were concerned, and louder than all arguments this result of the work of Congress portrays his disposition and anxiety to fulfill any just obligation under which he might be to the Whig party. But he had committed the great sin against it. For this there was no forgiveness. The short vacation between the middle of September and the first of December did not tend towards reconciliation. Feeling on the part of the Whig majority grew stronger against the President. The financial condition of the country was wretched indeed. States were repudiating their debts, and the General Government could not interfere. The great dogma of State Rights stood in the way. The act for distributing among the States the proceeds of the sale of the public lands was designed to help them to pay their debts, and was but a

smooth way of hoodwinking State Rights and so far assuming the debts of the reckless children of the Union. Mr. Tyler, with all his State sovereignty and strict constructionism, sanctioned the bill as he did the Bankrupt Act with a sense of pacifying the Whigs, of doing what he honorably could to meet their expectations, and with the private consolation resting on the specious argument that the public lands were the common property of the States. But the Whigs attributed every evil to the loss of their scheme, the great financial error of the age, which General Jackson had crushed in his iron grasp.

On the 6th of December, 1841, Congress again assembled, and actually continued in session until the last day of August, 1842, being one of the longest and most important and busy sessions in the history of that body, and is distinguished as the tariff session. The following is the President's

FIRST ANNUAL MESSAGE.

December 7, 1841.

TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES:—

In coming together, fellow-citizens, to enter again upon the discharge of the duties with which the people have charged us severally, we find great occasion to rejoice in the general prosperity of the country. We are in the enjoyment of all the blessings of civil and religious liberty, with unexampled means of education, knowledge, and improvement. Through the year which is now drawing to a close, peace has been in our borders, and plenty in our habitations; and although disease has visited some few portions of the land with distress and mortality, yet, in general, the health of the people has been preserved; and we are called upon, by the highest obligations of duty, to

renew our thanks and our devotion to our Heavenly Parent, who has continued to vouchsafe to us the eminent blessings which surround us and who has so signally crowned the year with his goodness. If we find ourselves increasing, beyond example, in numbers, in strength, in wealth, in knowledge, in everything which promotes human and social happiness, let us ever remember our dependence, for all these, on the protection and merciful dispensations of Divine Providence.

Since your last adjournment, Alexander McLeod, a British subject, who was indicted for the murder of an American citizen, and whose case has been the subject of a correspondence heretofore communicated to you, has been acquitted by the verdict of an impartial and intelligent jury, and has, under the judgment of the court, been regularly discharged.

Great Britain having made known to this Government that the expedition which was fitted out from Canada for the destruction of the steamboat *Caroline*, in the winter of 1837, and which resulted in the destruction of said boat and in the death of an American citizen, was undertaken by orders emanating from the authorities of the British Government in Canada, and demanding the discharge of McLeod upon the ground that, if engaged in that expedition, he did but fulfill the orders of his Government, has thus been answered in the only way in which she could be answered by a government, the powers of which are distributed among its several departments by the fundamental law. Happily for the people of Great Britain, as well as those of the United States, the only mode by which an individual, arraigned for a criminal offense before the courts of either, can obtain his discharge, is by the independent action of the judiciary, and by proceedings equally familiar to the courts of both countries.

If in Great Britain a power exists in the crown to cause to be entered a *nolle prosequi*, which is not the case with the Executive power of the United States upon a prosecution pending in a State court, yet there, no more than here, can the chief Executive power rescue a prisoner from custody without an order of the proper tribunal directing his discharge. The precise stage of the proceedings at which such order may be made is a matter of municipal regulation exclusively, and not

to be complained of by any other government. In cases of this kind a government becomes, politically, responsible only when its tribunals of last resort are shown to have rendered unjust and injurious judgments in matters not doubtful. To the establishment and elucidation of this principle no nation has lent its authority more efficiently than Great Britain. Alexander McLeod having his option either to prosecute a writ of error from the decision of the Supreme Court of New York, which had been rendered upon his application for a discharge to the Supreme Court of the United States, or to submit his case to the decision of a jury, preferred the latter, deeming it the readiest mode of obtaining his liberation; and the result has fully sustained the wisdom of his choice. The manner in which the issue submitted was tried will satisfy the English Government that the principles of justice will never fail to govern the enlightened decision of an American tribunal. I can not fail, however, to suggest to Congress the propriety, and, in some degree, the necessity, of making such provisions by law, so far as they may Constitutionally do so, for the removal, at their commencement and at the option of the party, of all such cases as may hereafter arise, and which may involve the faithful observance and execution of our international obligations, from the State to the Federal judiciary. This Government, by our institutions, is charged with the maintenance of peace and the preservation of amicable relations with the nations of the earth, and ought to possess, without question, all the reasonable and proper means of maintaining the one and preserving the other. While just confidence is felt in the judiciary of the States, yet this Government ought to be competent in itself for the fulfillment of the high duties which have been devolved upon it under the organic law by the States themselves.

In the month of September a party of armed men from Upper Canada invaded the territory of the United States, and forcibly seized upon the person of one Grogan, and, under circumstances of great harshness, hurriedly carried him beyond the limits of the United States, and delivered him up to the authorities of Upper Canada. His immediate discharge was ordered by those authorities upon the facts of the case being brought to their knowledge; a course of procedure

which was to have been expected from a nation with whom we are at peace, and which was not more due to the rights of the United States than to its own regard for justice. The correspondence which passed between the Department of State and the British envoy, Mr. Fox, and with the governor of Vermont, as soon as the facts had been made known to this Department, are herewith communicated.

I regret that it is not in my power to make known to you an equally satisfactory conclusion in the case of the *Caroline* steamer, with the circumstances connected with the destruction of which, in December, 1837, by an armed force fitted out in the province in Upper Canada, you are already made acquainted. No such atonement as was due for the public wrong done to the United States by this invasion of her territory, so wholly irreconcilable with her rights as an independent power, has yet been made. In the view taken by this Government the inquiry whether the vessel was in the employment of those who were prosecuting an unauthorized war against that province, or was engaged by the owner in the business of transporting passengers to and from Navy Island in hopes of private gain, which was most probably the case, in no degree alters the real question at issue between the two governments. This Government can never concede to any foreign government the power, except in a case of the most urgent and extreme necessity, of invading its territory, either to arrest the persons or destroy the property of those who may have violated the municipal laws of such foreign government, or have disregarded their obligations arising under the law of nations. The territory of the United States must be regarded as sacredly secure against all such invasions, until they shall voluntarily acknowledge their inability to acquit themselves of their duties to others. And, in announcing this sentiment, I do but affirm a principle which no nation on earth would be more ready to vindicate, at all hazards, than the people and government of Great Britain.

If, upon a full investigation of all the facts, it shall appear that the owner of the *Caroline* was governed by a hostile intent, or had made common cause with those who were in the occupancy of Navy Island, then, so far as he is concerned, there can be no claim to indemnity for the destruction of his

boat which this Government would feel itself bound to prosecute, since he would have acted, not only in derogation of the rights of Great Britain, but in clear violation of the laws of the United States; but that is a question which, however settled, in no manner involves the higher consideration of the violation of territorial sovereignty and jurisdiction. To recognize it as an admissible practice, that each government in its turn—upon any sudden and unauthorized outbreak on a frontier the extent of which renders it impossible for either to have an efficient force on every mile of it, and which outbreak, therefore, neither may be able to suppress in a day—may take vengeance into its own hands, and without even a remonstrance, and, in the absence of any pressing or overruling necessity, may invade the territory of the other, would inevitably lead to results equally to be deplored by both. When border collisions come to receive the sanction, or to be made on the authority of either government, general war must be the inevitable result. While it is the ardent desire of the United States to cultivate the relations of peace with all nations, and to fulfill all the duties of good neighborhood towards those who possess territories adjoining their own, that very desire would lead them to deny the right of any foreign power to invade their boundary with an armed force. The correspondence between the two governments on this subject will, at a future day of your session, be submitted to your consideration; and, in the meantime, I can not but indulge the hope that the British government will see the propriety of renouncing, as a rule of future action, the precedent which has been set in the affair at Schlosser.

I herewith submit the correspondence which has recently taken place between the American Minister at the Court of St. James, Mr. Stevenson, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of that government on the right claimed by that government to visit and detain vessels sailing under the American flag, and engaged in prosecuting lawful commerce in the African seas. Our commercial interests in that region have experienced considerable increase, and have become an object of much importance, and it is the duty of this Government to protect them against all improper and vexatious interruption. How-

ever desirous the United States may be for the suppression of the slave-trade, they can not consent to interpolations into the maritime code at the mere will and pleasure of other governments. We deny the right of any such interpolation to any one, or all the nations of the earth, without our consent. We claim to have a voice in all amendments or alterations of that code; and when we are given to understand, as in this instance, by a foreign government, that its treaties with other nations can not be executed without the establishment and enforcement of new principles of maritime police, to be applied without our consent, we must employ a language neither of equivocal import, nor susceptible of misconstruction. American citizens prosecuting a lawful commerce in the African seas, under the flag of their country, are not responsible for the abuse or unlawful use of that flag by others; nor can they rightfully, on account of any such alleged abuses, be interrupted, molested, or detained, while on the ocean; and if thus molested and detained while pursuing honest voyages in the usual way, and violating no law themselves, they are unquestionably entitled to indemnity. This Government has manifested its repugnance to the slave-trade in a manner which can not be misunderstood. By its fundamental law, it prescribed limits in point of time to its continuance, and against its own citizens, who might so far forget the rights of humanity as to engage in that wicked traffic, it has long since, by its municipal laws, denounced the most condign punishment. Many of the States composing this Union had made appeals to the civilized world for its suppression long before the moral sense of other nations had become shocked by the iniquities of the traffic. Whether this Government should now enter into treaties containing mutual stipulations upon this subject is a question for its mature deliberation. Certain it is, that if the right to detain American ships on the high seas can be justified on the plea of a necessity for such detention, arising out of the existence of treaties between other nations, the same plea may be extended and enlarged by the new stipulations of new treaties to which the United States may not be a party.

This Government will not cease to urge upon that of Great Britain full and ample remuneration for all losses,

whether arising from detention or otherwise, to which American citizens have heretofore been, or may hereafter be, subjected, by the exercise of rights which this Government can not recognize as legitimate and proper. Nor will I indulge a doubt but that the sense of justice of Great Britain will constrain her to make retribution for any wrong or loss which any American citizen, engaged in the prosecution of lawful commerce, may have experienced at the hand of her cruisers or other public authorities. This Government, at the same time, will relax no effort to prevent its citizens, if there be any so disposed, from prosecuting a traffic so revolting to the feelings of humanity. It seeks to do no more than to protect the fair and honest trader from molestation and injury; but while the enterprising mariner, engaged in the pursuit of an honorable trade, is entitled to its protection, it will visit with condign punishment others of an opposite character.

I invite your attention to existing laws for the suppression of the African slave-trade, and recommend all such alterations as may give to them greater force and efficacy. That the American flag is grossly abused by the abandoned and profligate of other nations is but too probable. Congress has, not long since, had this subject under its consideration, and its importance well justifies renewed and anxious attention.

I also communicate herewith the copy of a correspondence between Mr. Stevenson and Lord Palmerston upon the subject, so interesting to several of the Southern States, of the rice-duties, which resulted honorably to the justice of Great Britain, and advantageously to the United States.

At the opening of the last annual session, the President informed Congress of the progress which had then been made in negotiating a convention between this Government and that of England, with a view to the final settlement of the question of the boundary between the territorial limits of the two countries. I regret to say that little further advancement of the object has been accomplished since last year; but this is owing to circumstances no way indicative of any abatement of the desire of both parties to hasten the negotiation to its conclusion, and to settle the question in dispute as early as possible. In the course of the session it is my hope to be able to announce

some further degree of progress toward the accomplishment of this highly desirable end.

The commission appointed by this Government for the exploration and survey of the line of boundary separating the States of Maine and New Hampshire from the conterminous British provinces is, it is believed, about to close its field labors, and is expected soon to report the results of its examinations to the Department of State. The report, when received, will be laid before Congress.

The failure on the part of Spain to pay with punctuality the interest due under the convention of 1834, for the settlement of claims between the two countries, has made it the duty of the Executive to call the particular attention of that government to the subject. A disposition has been manifested by it, which is believed to be entirely sincere, to fulfill its obligations in this respect so soon as its internal condition and the state of its finances will permit. An arrangement is in progress, from the result of which it is trusted that those of our citizens who have claims under the convention will, at no distant day, receive the stipulated payments.

A treaty of commerce and navigation with Belgium was concluded and signed at Washington on the 29th of March, 1840, and was duly sanctioned by the Senate of the United States. The treaty was ratified by his Belgian majesty; but did not receive the approbation of the Belgian Chambers within the time limited by its terms, and has therefore become void.

This occurrence assumes the graver aspect from the consideration that, in 1833, a treaty negotiated between the two governments, and ratified on the part of the United States, failed to be ratified on the part of Belgium. The representative of that government at Washington informs the Department of State that he has been instructed to give explanations of the causes which occasioned delay in the approval of the late treaty by the Legislature, and to express the regret of the king at the occurrence.

The joint commission under the convention with Texas, to ascertain the true boundary between the two countries, has concluded its labors; but the final report of the Commissioners of the United States has not been received. It is understood,

however, that the meridian line, as traced by the commission, lies somewhat further east than the position hitherto generally assigned to it, and consequently includes in Texas some part of the territory which has been considered as belonging to the States of Louisiana and Arkansas.

The United States can not but take a deep interest in whatever relates to this young but growing Republic. Settled principally by emigrants from the United States, we have the happiness to know that the great principles of civil liberty are there destined to flourish under wise institutions and wholesome laws; and that, through its example, another evidence is to be afforded of the capacity of popular institutions to advance the prosperity, happiness, and permanent glory of the human race. The great truth that government was made for the people, and not the people for the government, has already been established in the practice and by the example of these United States, and we can do no other than contemplate its further exemplification by a sister Republic with the deepest interest.

Our relations with the independent States of this hemisphere, formerly under the dominion of Spain, have not undergone any material change within the past year. The incessant sanguinary conflicts in or between these countries are to be greatly deplored as necessarily tending to disable them from performing their duties as members of the community of nations, and rising to the destiny which the position and natural resources of many of them might lead them justly to anticipate; as constantly giving occasion, also, directly or indirectly, for complaints on the part of our citizens who resort thither for purposes of commercial intercourse; and as retarding reparation for wrongs already committed, some of which are by no means of recent date.

The failure of the Congress of Ecuador to hold a session at the time appointed for that purpose, in January last, will probably render abortive a treaty of commerce with that Republic, which was signed at Quito on the 13th of June, 1839, and had been duly ratified on our part, but which required the approbation of that body prior to its ratification by the Ecuadorian executive.

A convention which has been concluded with the Republic

of Peru, providing for the settlement of certain claims of citizens of the United States upon the government of that Republic, will be duly submitted to the Senate.

The claims of our citizens against the Brazilian government, originating from captures and other causes, are still unsatisfied. The United States have, however, so uniformly shown a disposition to cultivate relations of amity with that empire, that it is hoped the unequivocal tokens of the same spirit toward us, which an adjustment of the affairs referred to would afford, will be given without further avoidable delay.

The war with the Indian tribes on the peninsula of Florida has, during the last summer and fall, been prosecuted with untiring activity and zeal. A summer campaign was resolved upon as the best mode of bringing it to a close. Our brave officers and men, who have been engaged in that service, have suffered toils and privations, and exhibited an energy which, in any other war, would have won for them unfading laurels. In despite of the sickness incident to the climate, they have penetrated the fastnesses of the Indians, broken up their encampments, and harassed them unceasingly. Numbers have been captured, and still greater numbers have surrendered, and have been transported to join their brethren on the lands elsewhere allotted to them by the Government; and a strong hope is entertained that, under the conduct of the gallant officer at the head of the troops in Florida, that troublesome and expensive war is destined to a speedy termination. With all the other Indian tribes we are enjoying the blessings of peace. Our duty, as well as our best interests, prompts us to observe, in all our intercourse with them, fidelity in fulfilling our engagements, the practice of strict justice, as well as the constant exercise of acts of benevolence and kindness. These are the great instruments of civilization, and through the use of them alone can the untutored child of the forest be induced to listen to its teachings.

The Secretary of State, on whom the acts of Congress have devolved the duty of directing the proceedings for the taking of the sixth census, or enumeration of the inhabitants of the United States, will report to the two Houses the progress of that work. The enumeration of persons has been completed,

and exhibits a grand total of seventeen millions sixty-nine thousand four hundred and fifty-three, making an increase over the census of 1830 of four millions two hundred and two thousand six hundred and forty-six inhabitants, and showing a gain in a ratio exceeding thirty-two and a half per cent for the last ten years.

From the report of the Secretary of the Treasury you will be informed of the condition of the finances. The balance in the treasury on the 1st of January last, as stated in the report of the Secretary of the Treasury, submitted to Congress at the extra session, was nine hundred and eighty-seven thousand three hundred and forty-five dollars and three cents. The receipts into the treasury during the first three quarters of this year, from all sources, amount to twenty-three millions four hundred and sixty-seven thousand and fifty-two dollars and fifty-two cents. The estimated receipts of the fourth quarter amount to six millions nine hundred and forty-three thousand and ninety-five dollars and twenty-five cents, amounting to thirty millions four hundred and ten thousand one hundred and sixty-seven dollars and seventy-seven cents; and making, with the balance in the treasury on the 1st of January last, thirty-one millions three hundred and ninety-seven thousand five hundred and twelve dollars and eighty cents. The expenditures for the first three quarters of this year amount to twenty-four millions seven hundred and thirty-four thousand three hundred and forty-six dollars and ninety-seven cents. The expenditures for the fourth quarter, as estimated, will amount to seven millions two hundred and ninety thousand seven hundred and twenty-three dollars and seventy-three cents; thus making a total of thirty-two millions twenty-five thousand and seventy dollars and seventy cents, and leaving a deficit to be provided for, on the 1st of January next, of about six hundred and twenty-seven thousand five hundred and fifty-seven dollars and ninety cents.

Of the loan of twelve millions of dollars, which was authorized by Congress at its late session, only five millions four hundred and thirty-two thousand seven hundred and twenty-six dollars and eighty-eight cents have been negotiated. The shortness of time which it had to run has presented no inconsider-

erable impediment in the way of its being taken by capitalists at home, while the same cause would have operated with much greater force in the foreign market. For that reason the foreign market has not been resorted to; and it is now submitted, whether it would not be advisable to amend the law by making what remains undisposed of payable at a more distant day.

Should it be necessary, in any view that Congress may take of the subject, to revise the existing tariff of duties, I beg leave to say that, in the performance of that most delicate operation, moderate councils would seem to be the wisest. The Government under which it is our happiness to live owes its existence to the spirit of compromise which prevailed among its framers. Jarring and discordant opinions could only have been reconciled by that noble spirit of patriotism which prompted conciliation, and resulted in harmony. In the same spirit the Compromise Bill, as it is commonly called, was adopted at the session of 1833. While the people of no portion of the Union will ever hesitate to pay all necessary taxes for the support of Government, yet an innate repugnance exists to the imposition of burdens not really necessary for that object. In imposing duties, however, for the purposes of revenue, a right to discriminate as to the articles on which the duty shall be laid, as well as the amount, necessarily and most properly exists. Otherwise the Government would be placed in the condition of having to levy the same duties upon all articles, the productive as well as the unproductive. The slightest duty upon some might have the effect of causing their importation to cease, whereas others, entering extensively into the consumption of the country, might bear the heaviest, without any sensible diminution in the amount imported. So also the Government may be justified in so discriminating, by reference to other considerations of domestic policy connected with our manufactures. So long as the duties shall be laid with distinct reference to the wants of the treasury, no well-founded objection can exist against them. It might be esteemed desirable that no such augmentation of the taxes should take place as would have the effect of annulling the land proceeds distribution act of the last session, which act is declared to be

inoperative the moment the duties are increased beyond twenty per cent, the maximum rate established by the Compromise Act.

Some of the provisions of the Compromise Act, which will go into effect on the 30th day of June next, may, however, be found exceedingly inconvenient in practice, under any regulations that Congress may adopt. I refer more particularly to that relating to the home valuation. A difference in value of the same articles, to some extent, will necessarily exist at different ports; but that is altogether insignificant when compared with the conflicts in valuation which are likely to arise from the differences of opinion among the numerous appraisers of merchandise. In many instances the estimates of value must be conjectural, and thus as many different rates of value may be established as there are appraisers. These differences in valuation may also be increased by the inclination which, without the slightest imputation on their honesty, may arise on the part of the appraisers in favor of their respective ports of entry. I recommend this whole subject to the consideration of Congress, with a single additional remark. Certainty and permanency in any system of governmental policy are, in all respects, eminently desirable; but more particularly is this true in all that affects trade and commerce, the operations of which depend much more on the certainty of their returns, and calculations which embrace distant periods of time, than on high bounties or duties, which are liable to constant fluctuations.

At your late session I invited your attention to the condition of the currency and exchanges, and urged the necessity of adopting such measures as were consistent with the Constitutional competency of the Government, in order to correct the unsoundness of the one, and, as far as practicable, the inequalities of the other. No country can be in the enjoyment of its full measure of prosperity without the presence of a medium of exchange approximating to uniformity of value. What is necessary as between the different nations of the earth is also important as between the inhabitants of different parts of the same country. With the first the precious metals constitute the chief medium of circulation; and such also would be the case as to the last, but for inventions comparatively modern, which have furnished, in place of gold and silver, a paper circulation.

I do not propose to enter into a comparative analysis of the merits of the two systems. Such belonged more properly to the period of the introduction of the paper system. The speculative philosopher might find inducements to prosecute the inquiry, but his researches could only lead him to conclude that the paper system had probably better never have been introduced, and that society might have been much happier without it. The practical statesman has a very different task to perform. He has to look at things as they are; to take them as he finds them; to supply deficiencies, and to prune excesses, as far as in him lies. The task of furnishing a corrective for derangements of the paper medium with us, is almost inexpressibly great. The power exerted by the States to charter banking corporations, and which, having been carried to a great excess, has filled the country with, in most of the States, an irredeemable paper medium, is an evil which, in some way or other, requires a corrective. The rates at which bills of exchange are negotiated between different parts of the country, furnish an index of the value of the local substitute for gold and silver, which is in many parts so far depreciated as not to be received, except at a large discount, in payment of debts, or in the purchase of produce. It could earnestly be desired that every bank not possessing the means of resumption should follow the example of the late United States Bank of Pennsylvania, and go into liquidation, rather than, by refusing to do so, to continue embarrassments in the way of solvent institutions, thereby augmenting the difficulties incident to the present condition of things.

Whether this Government, with due regard to the rights of the States, has any power to constrain the banks either to resume specie payments, or to force them into liquidation, is an inquiry which will not fail to claim your consideration. In view of the great advantages which are allowed the corporators, not among the least of which is the authority contained in most of their charters, to make loans to three times the amount of their capital, thereby often deriving three times as much interest on the same amount of money as any individual is permitted by law to receive, no sufficient apology can be urged for a long-continued suspension of specie payments. Such

suspension is productive of the greatest detriment to the public, by expelling from circulation the precious metals, and seriously hazarding the success of any effort that this Government can make to increase commercial facilities, and to advance the public interests.

This is the more to be regretted, and the indispensable necessity for a sound currency becomes the more manifest, when we reflect on the vast amount of the internal commerce of the country. Of this we have no statistics nor just data for forming adequate opinions. But there can be no doubt but that the amount of transportation coastwise by sea, and the transportation inland by railroads and canals, and by steam-boats and other modes of conveyance over the surface of our vast rivers and immense lakes, and the value of property carried and interchanged by these means, form a general aggregate, to which the foreign commerce of the country, large as it is, makes but a distant approach.

In the absence of any controlling power over this subject, which, by forcing a general resumption of specie payments, would at once have the effect of restoring a sound medium of exchange, and would leave to the country but little to desire, what measure of relief, falling within the limits of our Constitutional competency, does it become this Government to adopt? It was my painful duty at your last session, under the weight of most solemn obligations, to differ with Congress on the measures which it proposed for my approval, and which it doubtless regarded as corrective of existing evils. Subsequent reflection, and events since occurring, have only served to confirm me in the opinions then entertained, and frankly expressed.

I must be permitted to add that no scheme of governmental policy, unaided by individual exertions, can be available for ameliorating the present condition of things. Commercial modes of exchange and a good currency are but the necessary means of commerce and intercourse, not the direct productive sources of wealth. Wealth can only be accumulated by the earnings of industry and the savings of frugality; and nothing can be more ill-judged than to look to facilities in borrowing, or to a redundant circulation, for the power of discharging

pecuniary obligations. The country is full of resources and the people full of energy, and the great and permanent remedy for present embarrassments must be sought in industry, economy, the observance of good faith, and the favorable influence of time.

In pursuance of a pledge given to you in my last message to Congress, which pledge I urge as an apology for adventuring to present you the details of any plan, the Secretary of the Treasury will be ready to submit to you, should you require it, a plan of finance which, while it throws around the public treasure reasonable guards for its protection, and rests on powers acknowledged in practice to exist from the origin of the Government, will, at the same time furnish to the country a sound paper medium, and afford all reasonable facilities for regulating the exchanges. When submitted, you will perceive in it a plan amendatory of the existing laws in relation to the Treasury Department; subordinate in all respects to the will of Congress directly, and the will of the people indirectly; self-sustaining, should it be found in practice to realize its promises in theory, and repealable at the pleasure of Congress.

It proposes, by effectual restraints, and by invoking the true spirit of our institutions, to separate the purse from the sword; or, more properly to speak, denies any other control to the President over the agents who may be selected to carry it into execution but what may be indispensably necessary to secure the fidelity of such agents; and, by wise regulations, keeps plainly apart from each other private and public funds. It contemplates the establishment of a board of control at the seat of Government, with agencies at prominent commercial points, or wherever else Congress shall direct, for the safe-keeping and disbursement of the public moneys, and a substitution, at the option of the public creditor of treasury-notes in lieu of gold and silver. It proposes to limit the issues to an amount not to exceed fifteen millions of dollars, without the express sanction of the legislative power. It also authorizes the receipt of individual deposits of gold and silver to a limited amount, and the granting certificates of deposit, divided into such sums as may be called for by the depositors. It proceeds a step further, and authorizes the purchase and sale of domestic

bills and drafts, resting on a real and substantial basis, payable at sight, or having but a short time to run, and drawn on places not less than one hundred miles apart—which authority, except in so far as may be necessary for government purposes exclusively, is only to be exerted upon the express condition that its exercise shall not be prohibited by the State in which the agency is situated.

In order to cover the expenses incident to the plan, it will be authorized to receive moderate premiums for certificates issued on deposits and on bills bought and sold, and thus, as far as its dealings extend, to furnish facilities to commercial intercourse at the lowest possible rates, and to subduct from the earnings of industry the least possible sum. It uses the State banks at a distance from the agencies, as auxiliaries, without imparting any power to trade in its name. It is subjected to such guards and restraints as have appeared to be necessary. It is the creature of law, and exists only at the pleasure of the legislature. It is made to rest on an actual specie basis, in order to redeem the notes at the places of issue; produces no dangerous redundancy of circulation; affords no temptation to speculation; is attended by no inflation of prices; is equal in its operation; makes the treasury-notes (which it may use along with the certificates of deposit and the notes of specie-paying banks) convertible at the place where collected, receivable in payment of Government dues; and, without violating any principle of the Constitution, affords the Government and the people such facilities as are called for by the wants of both. Such, it has appeared to me, are its recommendations, and in view of them it will be submitted, whenever you may require it, to your consideration.

I am not able to perceive that any fair and candid objection can be urged against the plan, the principal outlines of which I have thus presented. I can not doubt but that the notes which it proposes to furnish at the voluntary option of the public creditor, issued in lieu of the revenue and its certificates of deposit, will be maintained at an equality with gold and silver everywhere. They are redeemable in gold and silver on demand, at the places of issue. They are receivable everywhere in payment of Government dues. The treasury-notes are limited

to an amount of one-fourth less than the estimated annual receipts of the treasury; and in addition, they rest upon the faith of the Government for their redemption. If all these assurances are not sufficient to make them available, then the idea, as it seems to me, of furnishing a sound paper medium of exchanges may be entirely abandoned.

If a fear be indulged that the Government may be tempted to run into excess in its issues at any future day, it seems to me that no such apprehension can reasonably be entertained until all confidence in the Representatives of the States and of the people, as well as of the people themselves, shall be lost. The weightiest considerations of policy require that the restraints now proposed to be thrown around the measure should not for light causes be removed. To argue against any proposed plan its liability to possible abuses is to reject every expedient, since everything dependent upon human action is liable to abuse. Fifteen millions of treasury-notes may be issued as the maximum; but a discretionary power is to be given to the board of control under that sum, and every consideration will unite in leading them to feel their way with caution. For the first eight years of the existence of the late Bank of the United States its circulation barely exceeded four millions of dollars, and for five of its most prosperous years it was about equal to sixteen millions of dollars; furthermore, the authority given to receive private deposits to a limited amount, and to issue certificates in such sums as may be called for by the depositors, may so far fill up the channels of circulation as greatly to diminish the necessity of any considerable issue of treasury-notes.

A restraint upon the amount of private deposits has seemed to be indispensably necessary from an apprehension, thought to be well founded, that, in any emergency of trade, confidence might be so far shaken in the banks as to induce a withdrawal from them of private deposits, with a view to insure their unquestionable safety when deposited with the Government, which might prove eminently disastrous to the State banks. Is it objected that it is proposed to authorize the agencies to deal in bills of exchange? It is answered that such dealings are to be carried on at the lowest possible premium; are made

to rest upon an unquestionably sound basis; are designed to reimburse merely the expenses which would otherwise devolve upon the treasury, and are in strict subordination to the decision of the Supreme Court in the case of the Bank of Augusta against Earle, and other reported cases; and thereby avoids all conflict with State jurisdiction, which I hold to be indispensably requisite. It leaves the banking privileges of the States without interference; looks to the treasury and the Union, and, while furnishing every facility to the first, is careful of the interest of the last. But, above all, it is created by law, is amendable by law, and is repealable by law; and wedded as I am to no theory, but looking solely to the advancement of the public good, I shall be among the very first to urge its repeal if it be found not to subserve the purposes and objects for which it may be created. Nor will the plan be submitted in any overweening confidence in the sufficiency of my own judgment, but with much greater reliance on the wisdom and patriotism of Congress. I can not abandon this subject without urging upon you, in the most emphatic manner, whatever may be your action on the suggestions which I have felt it to be my duty to submit, to relieve the Chief Executive Magistrate, by any and all Constitutional means, from a controlling power over the public treasury. If, in the plan proposed, should you deem it worthy of your consideration, that separation is not as complete as you may desire, you will doubtless amend it in that particular. For myself, I disclaim all desire to have any control over the public moneys other than what is indispensably necessary to execute the laws which you may pass.

Nor can I fail to advert, in this connection, to the debts which many of the States of the Union have contracted abroad, and under which they continue to labor. That indebtedness amounts to a sum not less than two hundred millions of dollars; and which has been retributed to them, for the most part, in works of internal improvement, which are destined to prove of vast importance in ultimately advancing their prosperity and wealth. For the debts thus contracted the States are alone responsible. I can do no more than express the belief that each State will feel itself bound, by every consideration of honor as well as of interest, to meet its engagements with

punctuality. The failure, however, of any one State to do so should, in no degree, affect the credit of the rest; and the foreign capitalist will have no just cause to experience alarm as to all other State stocks, because any one or more of the States may neglect to provide with punctuality the means of redeeming their engagements. Even such States, should there be any, considering the great rapidity with which their resources are developing themselves, will not fail to have the means, at no very distant day, to redeem their obligations to the uttermost farthing; nor will I doubt but that, in view of that honorable conduct which has evermore governed the States and the people of this Union, they will each and all resort to every legitimate expedient before they will forego a faithful compliance with their obligations.

From the report of the Secretary of War, and other reports accompanying it, you will be informed of the progress which has been made in the fortifications designed for the protection of our principal cities, roadsteads, and inland frontier, during the present year, together with their true state and condition. They will be prosecuted to completion with all the expedition which the means placed by Congress at the disposal of the Executive will allow.

I recommend particularly to your consideration that portion of the Secretary's report which proposes the establishment of a chain of military posts from Council Bluffs to some point on the Pacific Ocean within our limits. The benefits thereby destined to accrue to our citizens engaged in the fur-trade over that wilderness region, added to the importance of cultivating friendly relations with savage tribes inhabiting it, and, at the same time, of giving protection to our frontier settlements, and of establishing the means of safe intercourse between the American settlements at the mouth of the Columbia River and those on this side of the Rocky Mountains, would seem to suggest the importance of carrying into effect the recommendations upon this head with as little delay as may be practicable.

The report of the Secretary of the Navy will place you in possession of the present condition of that important arm of the national defense. Every effort will be made to add to its efficiency; and I can not too strongly urge upon you liberal

appropriations to that branch of the public service. Inducements of the weightiest character exist for the adoption of this course of policy. Our extended and otherwise exposed maritime frontier calls for protection, to the furnishing of which an efficient naval force is indispensable. We look to no foreign conquests, nor do we propose to enter into competition with any other nation for supremacy on the ocean; but it is due, not only to the honor, but to the security, of the people of the United States, that no nation should be permitted to invade our waters at pleasure, and subject our towns and villages to conflagration or pillage. Economy in all branches of the public service is due from all the public agents to the people; but parsimony alone would suggest the withholding of the necessary means for the protection of our domestic firesides from invasion, and our national honor from disgrace. I would most earnestly recommend to Congress to abstain from all appropriations for objects not absolutely necessary; but I take upon myself, without a moment of hesitancy, all the responsibility of recommending the increase and prompt equipment of that gallant navy which has lighted up every sea with its victories, and spread an imperishable glory over the country.

The report of the Postmaster-General will claim your particular attention, not only because of the valuable suggestions which it contains, but because of the great importance which at all times attaches to that interesting branch of the public service. The increased expense of transporting the mail along the principal routes necessarily claims the public attention, and has awakened a corresponding solicitude on the part of the Government. The transmission of the mails must keep pace with those facilities of intercommunication which are every day becoming greater through the building of railroads and the application of steam-power; but it can not be disguised that, in order to do so, the Post-office Department is subjected to heavy exactions. The lines of communication between distant parts of the Union are, to a great extent, occupied by railroads, which, in the nature of things, possess a complete monopoly, and the Department is therefore liable to heavy and unreasonable charges. This evil is destined to great

increase in future, and some timely measure may become necessary to guard against it.

I feel it my duty to bring under your consideration a practice which has grown up in the administration of the Government, and which, I am deeply convinced, ought to be corrected. I allude to the exercise of the power which usage, rather than reason, has vested in the President of removing incumbents from office in order to substitute others more in favor with the dominant party. My own conduct in this respect has been governed by a conscientious purpose to exercise the removing power only in cases of unfaithfulness or inability, or in those in which its exercise appeared necessary, in order to discountenance and suppress that spirit of active partisanship on the part of holders of office which not only withdraws them from the steady and impartial discharge of their official duties, but exerts an undue and injurious influence over elections, and degrades the character of the Government itself, inasmuch as it exhibits the Chief Magistrate as being a party, through his agents, in the secret plots or open workings of political parties.

In respect to the exercise of this power, nothing should be left to discretion which may safely be regulated by law; and it is of high importance to restrain, as far as possible, the stimulus of personal interests in public elections. Considering the great increase which has been made in public officers in the last quarter of a century, and the probability of further increase, we incur the hazard of witnessing violent political contests, directed too often to the single object of retaining office by those who are in, or obtaining it by those who are out. Under the influence of these convictions, I shall cordially concur in any Constitutional measures for regulating, and, by regulating, restraining the power of removal.

I suggest for your consideration the propriety of making, without further delay, some specific application of the funds derived under the will of Mr. Smithson, of England, for the diffusion of knowledge, and which have heretofore been vested in public stocks until such time as Congress should think proper to give them a specific direction. Nor will you, I feel confident, permit any abatement of the principal of the legacy to

be made, should it turn out that the stocks in which the investments have been made have undergone a depreciation.

In conclusion, I commend to your care the interests of this District, for which you are the exclusive legislators. Considering that this city is the residence of the Government, and, for a large part of the year, of Congress; and considering, also, the great cost of the public buildings, and the propriety of affording them at all times careful protection, it seems not unreasonable that Congress should contribute toward the expense of an efficient police.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PRESIDENT AND HIS FRIENDS—THE TARIFF VETO—
MR. TYLER'S PROTEST—HENRY CLAY—THE DORR
REBELLION—THE SEMINOLE WAR ENDED.

THE main points mentioned in this message are the tariff and a plan for a bank or general exchequer. This feature of the message was especially offensive to some of the Democrats. Mr. Benton called it a "revolting scheme and fit for immediate condemnation." But in both this and his recommendations as to the tariff for revenue the President had made another attempt to give the Whigs a chance, as well as exhibited his anxiety to remedy the evils of the country.

The extra session, the Democrats claimed, had really ended in a moral victory for them, and held that they were already ripe for the next election. The fiscal plan presented by Mr. Forward, the Secretary of the Treasury, it is claimed, was mainly the production of Mr. Webster, as was the greater part of the Treasurer's report. The President now calls the attention of Congress to the necessity of establishing a chain of forts to connect with the settlements on the Columbia River, for the first time bringing forward a question destined to be of considerable importance in his Administration. The Florida

War is also mentioned in a hopeful tone; and a just and wise view taken of the unrepugnant and corrupting practice of removals of office-holders, clerks, etc., for party reasons. Unfortunately Mr. Tyler was not able to adhere fully to his just rule of displacements only by reason of unfaithfulness and inability.

The new and peculiar financial scheme recommended by the President and of which he was mainly, if not wholly, the author, was at once taken up by Congress. In the House a committee of nine members, with Caleb Cushing as its chairman, took charge of the subject. The majority of the committee favored the plan, and made an elaborate report in its commendation. A dissenting member of this special financial committee was John P. Kennedy, of Maryland, the author of the Whig manifesto at the close of the special session. But Mr. Cushing's report was never acted upon in the House, and in the Senate the President's method was in a like manner treated with contempt by both Whigs and Democrats. Yet it does not appear to-day that this conduct of Congress was either just or wise. The plan proposed by Mr. Tyler, besides the valuable features of the "Sub-Treasury" of Martin Van Buren, added the issue of paper currency within proper limits (or without the chances of inflation) and without ability to suspend specie redemption; and provided for a gold and silver standard, or paper fixed at the coin equivalent. This and Mr. Van Buren's Independent Treasury were really the foundation of the magnificent and universally acceptable Greenback and United

States (Independent) Treasury system of to-day. It was the same broad national plan, freed from any kind of State interference, or private corporations, and in its ultimate workings should have embraced the main and valuable features of the present system. This fact has been lost sight of among the claims for public honors, and especially in the prevailing and strangely inconsiderate way of treating everything done by John Tyler as in some way connected with treason to the Whig party, and as furnishing an Administration unworthy of ordinary note. It was according to the whim of both Whigs and Democrats at that time to see nothing valuable in the recommendations. At least this seems only a fair conclusion. Then, too, the most difficult of all subjects of legislation and government, and the least perfectly understood, have always been revenue and finance; and the infinite number of schemes and theories on these subjects in the history of parties and governments has always been deserving of less serious consideration than any other matters of great human interest.

Soon after Congress convened an attempt was made to repeal the Bankrupt Law of the previous session, and although the House passed the act to repeal by a vote of one hundred and twenty-four to ninety-six, in the Senate it was defeated by one vote, and a law objectionable to both parties went into operation. On the 16th of March, 1842, the House sent to the President asking the names of members of the House for that and the previous terms of Congress who had sought office under the Administration,

and the modes in which the offices had been sought. This piece of impertinence the President treated in the proper spirit, utterly refusing to give any such information, and taking occasion to say: "Any assumption or misapprehension on the part of the House of Representatives of its duties and powers in respect to appointments, by which it encroaches on the rights and duties of the Executive Department, is, to the extent to which it reaches, dangerous, impolitic, and unconstitutional." The House of Representatives has nothing to do with the Executive appointments, and if this demand on the President was not designed to do so, it really had the effect of widening the gap between the legislative and executive branches.

On the 25th of March the President sent a message to both Houses of Congress, urging the revenue necessities of the Government, and advising a revision of the tariff of duties. The act providing for the distribution of the proceeds of land-sales among the States, also provided for the cessation of the act when the demands of the revenue exceeded the rate of duties specified in the distribution bill. That time had already arrived, and while admitting the error of the bill itself, the President recommended that the proceeds of the land-sales should be appropriated to the revenue needs of the General Government. The borrowing power of the Government at this time was not in a flattering condition; some debts had already gone to protest, and the Treasury was without money. Something was demanded for

immediate relief. The famous compromise Tariff Act of 1833, although it had served to quiet extreme sectional strife, had not quite fulfilled its other objects, perhaps. But, at all events, the great mistake of providing for the distribution of the surplus revenue among the States in 1837, completed what the compromise tariff would not have done in itself. And in the very face of the crippled revenues of the country the proceeds of the land-sales were to be surrendered to the States. Of course, a very small part of the evils of this state of affairs was in any way attributable to Mr. Tyler's Administration, and even that he had now taken a step for undoing. On the recommendation of the special message referred to Congress began the preparation of a new tariff measure. This was submitted to the President as a provisional tariff, and was vetoed by him on the 29th of June.

Another bill was passed revising the whole tariff, and, on the 9th of August, the President sent a message to the House, prepared mainly by himself, and without the advice of his Cabinet proper, also vetoing this. This second veto stirred up a violent storm in the House, and finished the work of separation between the Whigs and Mr. Tyler. A committee of thirteen members was appointed to consider the case, and Mr. Adams, chairman of the committee, made a majority report, Mr. Benton said, "strong against Mr. Tyler personally, but no case at all in favor of the distribution clause." Ten members signed Mr. Adams's report. Thomas W. Gilmer

made a report of his own, and Charles J. Ingersoll and James J. Roosevelt also made a report, the two minority reports supporting the President.

To all of this business Mr. Tyler objected, and after he had virtually succeeded in carrying his own point as to a revenue bill, made the following spirited

PROTEST.

TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES:—

By the Constitution of the United States it is provided that “every bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate shall, before it becomes a law, be presented to the President of the United States; if he approve, he shall sign it; but if not, he shall return it, with his objections, to that House in which it shall have originated, who shall enter the objections at large upon the journal, and proceed to consider it.”

In strict compliance with the positive obligation thus imposed upon me by the Constitution, not having been able to bring myself to approve a bill which originated in the House of Representatives, entitled “An Act to provide revenue from imports, and for other purposes,” I returned the same to the House with my objections to its becoming a law. These objections, which had entirely satisfied my mind of the great impolicy, if not the unconstitutionality, of the measure, were presented in the most respectful, and even deferential, terms. I would not have been so far forgetful of what was due from one department of the Government to another as to have intentionally employed, in my official intercourse with the House, any language that could be, in the slightest degree, offensive to those to whom it was addressed. If, in assigning my objections to the bill, I had so far forgotten what was due to the House of Representatives, as to impugn its motives in passing the bill, I should owe, not only to that House, but to the country, my most profound apology. Such departure from propriety is, however, not complained of in any proceeding which the House has adopted. It has, on the contrary, been expressly made a subject of remark, and almost of complaint,

that the language in which my dissent was couched was studiously guarded and cautious.

Such being the character of the official communication in question, I confess I was wholly unprepared for the course which has been pursued in regard to it. In the exercise of the power to regulate its own proceedings the House, for the first time, it is believed, in the history of the Government, thought proper to refer the message to a select committee of its own body, for the purpose (as my respect for the House would have compelled me to infer) of deliberately weighing the objections urged against the bill by the Executive, with a view to its own judgment upon the question of the final adoption or rejection of the measure.

Of the temper and feelings in relation to myself of some of the members selected for the performance of this duty I have nothing to say. That was a matter entirely within the discretion of the House of Representatives. But that committee, taking a different view of its duty from that which I should have supposed had led to its creation, instead of confining itself to the objections urged against the bill, availed itself of the occasion formally to arraign the President for others of his acts since his induction into office. In the absence of all proof, and, as I am bound to declare, against all law or precedent in parliamentary proceedings, and, at the same time, in a manner which would be difficult to reconcile with the comity hitherto sacredly observed in the intercourse between independent and co-ordinate departments of the Government, it has assailed my whole official conduct, without a shadow of a pretext for such assault; and stopping short of impeachment, has charged me, nevertheless, with offenses declared to deserve impeachment.

Had the extraordinary report which the committee thus made to the House been permitted to remain without the sanction of the latter, I should not have uttered a regret or complaint upon the subject. But, unaccompanied as it is by any particle of testimony to support the charges it contains, without a deliberate examination, almost without any discussion, the House of Representatives has been pleased to adopt it as its own, and thereby to become my accuser before the country

and before the world. The high character of such an accuser, the gravity of the charges which have been made, and the judgment pronounced against me by the adoption of the report upon a distinct and separate vote of the House, leave me no alternative but to enter my solemn protest against the proceeding, as unjust to myself as a man, as an invasion of my Constitutional powers of Chief Magistrate of the American people, and as a violation, in my person, of rights secured to every citizen by the laws and the Constitution. That Constitution has intrusted to the House of Representatives the sole power of impeachment. Such impeachment is required to be tried before the most august tribunal known to our institutions.

The Senate of the United States, composed of the representatives of the sovereignty of the States, is converted into a hall of justice; and, in order to insure the strictest observance of the rules of evidence and of legal procedure, the Chief Justice of the United States, the highest judicial functionary of the land, is required to preside over its deliberations. In the presence of such judicatory the voice of faction is presumed to be silent, and the sentence of guilt or innocence is pronounced under the most solemn sanctions of religion, of honor, and of law. To such a tribunal does the Constitution authorize the House of Representatives to carry up its accusations against any Chief of the Executive Department whom it may believe to be guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors. Before that tribunal the accused is confronted with his accusers, and may demand the privilege, which the justice of the common law secures to the humblest citizen, of a full, patient, and impartial inquiry into the facts, upon the testimony of witnesses rigidly examined, and deposing in the face of day. If such a proceeding had been adopted toward me, unjust as I certainly should have regarded it, I should, I trust, have met, with a becoming constancy, a trial as painful as it would have been undeserved. I would have manifested, by a profound submission to the laws of my country, my perfect faith in her justice; and relying on the purity of my motives and the rectitude of my conduct, should have looked forward with confidence to a triumphant refutation in the presence of that

country, and by the solemn judgment of such a tribunal, not only of whatever charges might have been formally preferred against me, but of all the calumnies of which I have hitherto been the unresisting victim.

As it is, I have been accused without evidence, and condemned without a hearing. As far as such proceedings can accomplish it, I am deprived of public confidence in the Administration of the Government, and denied even the boast of a good name—a name transmitted to me from a patriot father, prized as my proudest inheritance, and carefully preserved for those who are to come after me, as the most precious of all earthly possessions. I am not only subjected to imputations affecting my character as an individual, but am charged with offenses against the country, so grave and so heinous, as to deserve public disgrace and disfranchisement. I am charged with violating pledges which I never gave, and, because I execute what I believe to be the law, with usurping powers not conferred by law; and, above all, with using the powers conferred upon the President by the Constitution from corrupt motives and for unwarrantable ends. And these charges are made without any particle of evidence to sustain them, and, as I solemnly affirm, without any foundation in truth.

Why is a proceeding of this sort adopted at this time? Is the occasion for it found in the fact that, having been elected to the second office under the Constitution by the free and voluntary suffrages of the people, I have succeeded to the first, according to the express provisions of the fundamental law of the same people? It is true that the succession of the Vice-President to the Chief Magistracy has never occurred before, and that all prudent and patriotic minds have looked on this new trial of the wisdom and stability of our institutions with a somewhat anxious concern. I have been made to feel too sensibly the difficulties of my unprecedented position, not to know all that is intended to be conveyed in the reproach cast upon a President without a party. But I found myself placed in this most responsible station by no usurpation or contrivance of my own. I was called to it, under Providence, by the supreme law of the land, and the deliberately declared will of the people. It is by these, the people, that I have been clothed with the

high powers which they have seen fit to confide to their Chief Executive, and been charged with the solemn responsibility under which those powers are to be exercised. It is to them I hold myself answerable, as a moral agent, for a free and conscientious discharge of the duties which they have imposed upon me. It is not as an individual merely that I am now called upon to resist the encroachment of unconstitutional power. I represent the Executive authority of the people of the United States; and it is in their name (whose mere agent and servant I am, and whose will, declared in their fundamental law, I dare not, even were I inclined, to disobey) that I protest against every attempt to break down the undoubted Constitutional power of this Department, without a solemn amendment of the fundamental law.

I am determined to uphold the Constitution in this, as in other respects, to the utmost of my ability, and in defiance of all personal consequences. What may happen to an individual is of little importance; but the Constitution of the country, or any of its great and clear principles and provisions, is too sacred to be surrendered, under any circumstances whatever, by those who are charged with its protection and defense. Least of all should he be held guiltless who, placed at the head of one of the great Departments of the Government, should shrink from the exercise of its unquestionable authority on the most important occasions; and should consent, without a struggle, to efface all the barriers so carefully created by the people to control and circumscribe the powers confided to their various agents. It may be desirable, as the majority of the House of Representatives has declared it is, that no such checks upon the will of the Legislature should be suffered to continue. This is a matter for the people and the States to decide; but, until they shall have decided it, I shall feel myself bound to execute, without fear or favor, the law as it has been written by our predecessors.

I protest against this whole proceeding of the House of Representatives, as *ex-parte* and *extra judicial*. I protest against it as subversive of the common right of all citizens to be condemned only upon a fair and impartial trial, according to law and evidence, before the country. I protest against it as

destructive of all the comity of intercourse between the Departments of this Government, and destined, sooner or later, to lead to conflicts fatal to the peace of the country and the integrity of the Constitution. I protest against it in the name of that Constitution which is not only my own shield of protection and defense, but that of every American citizen. I protest against it in the name of the people, by whose will I stand where I do, and by whose authority I exercised the power which I am charged with having usurped, and to whom I am responsible for the firm and faithful discharge, according to my own convictions of duty, of the high stewardship confided to me by them. I protest against it, in the name of all regulated liberty and all limited government, as a proceeding tending to the utter destruction of the checks and balances of the Constitution, and the accumulating in the hands of the House of Representatives, or a bare majority of Congress for the time being, an uncontrolled and despotic power. And I respectfully ask that this, my protest, may be entered upon the journal of the House of Representatives, as a solemn and formal declaration, for all time to come, of the injustice and unconstitutionality of such a proceeding.

JOHN TYLER.

WASHINGTON, August 30, 1842.

In the meantime a third bill had been prepared, without the land-distribution clause, and shorn of some other objectionable features. This bill was passed by a close vote in the House, and received the sanction of the President. This act became a law on the same day on which the protest was issued and on the next day Congress adjourned. At this long and quarrelsome session an act was passed for the better apportionment of Congressional representation; also acts authorizing the issue of treasury-notes, for extending the loan of 1841, for building a war steamer for harbor defense, for promoting useful arts, and for the armed occupation of Florida with

bounties of one hundred and sixty acres of land to actual settlers in that Territory.

At the close of this session President Tyler was without a party, or rather he had in Congress what Mr. Clay had denominated a corporal's guard. This consisted of William C. Rives only in the Senate and six members of the House. Caleb Cushing and Henry A. Wise were the leaders, but the latter considered himself the corporal in command or the captain of the guard; and perhaps no more indiscreet, incautious, unsafe, and prejudicial commander ever took charge of the safe-keeping and advancement of the honor and interest of another, than Henry A. Wise. Only to one well acquainted with Mr. Wise and who could appreciate his extravagance was any man safe under his representations. His extravagant eulogy carried with it the air of the ridiculous, if no more, which nothing but an intimate knowledge of the character of the man could interpret in a favorable light. He became greatly devoted to Mr. Tyler personally, and was such an intense admirer of Legaré, as to say that they were both canonized for their wisdom, moral courage, and integrity.

The Democrats were now gathering and organizing their forces, and began already to see themselves conquerors in the next Presidential contest. They did not want Mr. Tyler as a leader certainly. The Whigs were done with him forever. Between the two parties, both indifferent to him, he barely succeeded in being able to draw from Congress the means of conducting the Administration. Had he

done just what the Whigs wanted him to do from the outset, this would not have been the case. There is no doubt of that. But considering him a man of ability and integrity, this he could not do. Even for his uncertain and fluctuating policy with the Whigs in the special session there is some apology; and where the burden of responsibility rested for the slanderous want of harmony between the President and Congress, it may be the careful reader of the events of the time will not have much difficulty in deciding.

Late in March an event occurred in the Senate which deserves note here. That was the retirement of Mr. Clay. A month or two before he had asked the Legislature of Kentucky to elect his successor, and Mr. Crittenden was accordingly sent to Washington to take his place. Mr. Clay considered it incumbent upon him to deliver a farewell address to the Senate. This was out of the usual order for members of the Senate, and although the whole performance was kindly received, it was uncalled for and was hardly within the boundary of that dignified body, however well it might have applied in other less pretentious places. The Senate adjourned out of respect for Mr. Clay; and in reference to the valedictory Mr. Benton said, properly enough, that "it might not be commendable for any one except another Henry Clay, if another should ever appear, to attempt its imitation."

In January, 1842, Mr. Adams presented a petition from a number of citizens of Haverhill, Massachusetts, praying for a dissolution of the Union mainly on account of unequal burdens, it was

claimed; and Joshua R. Giddings, of Ohio, presented a petition from citizens of his district asking the same on account of slavery. Mr. Adams also presented a petition from Georgia asking his removal from the chairmanship of Foreign Relations. These matters created strange and shameful scenes of excitement in the House for several days, some account of which may be found in a previous volume of this work. Although the matter was temporarily quieted, Mr. Giddings finally drew upon him the censure of the majority of the House, and at once resigned his seat, and set out for Ohio.

In the fall of 1841, the brig *Creole* had started from Norfolk, Virginia, with a cargo for New Orleans. A part of this cargo was one hundred and thirty-seven negroes for the Southern market. Near the Bahama Islands nineteen of the slaves mutinied, killed one of the officers, and forced the vessel to land at Nassau. There the mutineers were held for some time by the authorities to receive instructions from London, and the other slaves were set at liberty. The British Government finally refused to give up any of them, and the mutineers were also set free. In March, 1842, Mr. Giddings introduced resolutions to the effect that, when the *Creole* passed into the ocean, beyond the jurisdiction of Virginia, the laws of slavery did not apply to her, and the slaves violated no law of the United States in resuming the rights of personal liberty; and that all efforts to re-enslave the negroes of the *Creole* would be incompatible with national honor, unauthorized

by the Constitution, and disagreeable to the feelings and interests of a large part of the Nation. John Minor Botts, who had defended Mr. Adams, now offered a resolution of censure on Mr. Giddings, and this was, on the 22d of March, adopted by a vote of one hundred and twenty-five to sixty-nine. On the next day Giddings sent in his resignation; on the 26th of April, was re-elected by a large majority at a special election ordered by the Governor of Ohio, and on the 5th of May of the same year again took his seat in Congress.

During this session Joseph R. Underwood, of Kentucky, brought up the question of Mr. Tyler's assumption of the title of President, and severely abused him for so doing. Many others also still doubted the propriety of the step. They claimed that Mr. Tyler was not President, and that he was only Vice-President now when acting in the place of the President; that that was the only proper application of Vice, and hence he was now merely and for the first time Vice-President Tyler, what he was only prospectively before the death of General Harrison. Mr. Underwood was a very persistent opponent of Mr. Tyler and his Administration, and early in the next session of Congress he announced his intention to introduce a resolution for the impeachment of the President.

Early in the spring of 1842, President Tyler was called upon to exercise the authority of the General Government in an unusual manner. This was in relation to what was termed the "Dorr Rebellion"

in Rhode Island. His own letter to Governor King fully indicates the duty of the Government in the premises, and also shows all that he did as its Executive, all that he should have done, perhaps, while it exhibits his readiness to proceed to the full extent of his power when the moment came for action. This interesting case deserves a page here. The government of the State of Rhode Island still maintained the features of the original charter granted by England's king in 1663. Under it two-thirds of the citizens, men of age, had not the right of suffrage. A few men of property and their oldest sons only were voters. The duty of the General Government had been neglected as to Rhode Island. The Constitution insured to every State a republican form of government. Rhode Island, in several respects, had not such a form; and yet this great error and injustice had been allowed by the United States. Thomas W. Dorr, a bold and just man, finally took it upon himself to reform the outrage so long submitted to by his countrymen. Dorr was a lawyer, and resided at Providence. He was made a member of the Legislature with a view to better prosecuting his honorable intentions. His labors were in vain amidst a property aristocracy, a purse-proud Legislature. Out of seventy members, his plan to republicanize the government received only seven votes. After this ignominious result Dorr properly enough appealed to the people. In 1840 and 1841 public meetings were held, and the great question discussed. A convention was

called, a new Constitution formed, submitted to the vote of the people, and resulted in a majority in its favor. Dorr then proceeded to declare this Constitution the law of the State, and ordered the elections to be held under it. He was himself elected Governor; and the new Legislature, composed of supporters of the scheme, was to meet at Providence early in May, 1842. In the meantime the old King Charles Chartists had held an election, and declared Dorr's whole business fraudulent and of no effect. But Dorr claimed a majority of two thousand for his ticket, and on the 3d of May attempted to organize and seize the affairs of the State. On the same day Governor Samuel W. King and his Chartist Legislature assembled at Newport. King declared the little State under martial law. On the 13th the two parties met in arms at Providence, but the Dorrists were put to flight. On the 25th of May they again met near Providence with a similar result. Two or three days afterwards the affair had ended, and Dorr had left the State. Long before the final outbreak, Governor King had sent a committee of three staunch Chartists to Washington City to lay the matter before the Administration, and ask aid to put down the great rebellion. The following answer was returned by Mr. Tyler:—

“TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF RHODE ISLAND:—

“SIR,—Your letter, dated the 4th instant, was handed me on Friday by Mr. Whipple, who, in company with Mr. Francis and Mr. Potter, called upon me on Saturday,

and placed me, both verbally and by writing, in possession of the prominent facts which have led to the present unhappy condition of things in Rhode Island; a state of things which every lover of peace and good order must deplore. I shall not adventure the expression of an opinion upon those questions of domestic policy which seem to have given rise to the unfortunate controversies between a portion of the citizens and the existing government of the State. They are questions of municipal regulation, the adjustment of which belongs exclusively to the people of Rhode Island, and with which this Government can have nothing to do. For the regulation of my conduct in any interposition which I may be called upon to make between the government of a State and any portion of its citizens who may assail it with domestic violence, or may be in actual insurrection against it, I can only look to the Constitution and laws of the United States, which plainly declare the obligations of the Executive Department, and leave it no alternative as to the course it shall pursue.

“By the fourth section of the fourth article of the Constitution of the United States, it is provided that the United States shall guaranty to every State in this Union a republican form of Government, and shall protect each of them against invasion; and, on the application of the Legislature, or executive when the Legislature can not be convened, against domestic violence. And by the act of Congress, approved on the 28th of February, 1795, it is declared that, in case of an insurrection in any State against the government thereof, it shall be lawful for the President of the United States, upon the application of the Legislature of said State, or of the executive when the Legislature can not be convened, to call forth such number of the militia of any other State or States as may be applied for, as he may judge sufficient to suppress such insurrection. By the third section of the same act, it is

provided that whenever it may be necessary, in the judgment of the President, to use the military force hereby directed to be called forth, the President shall forthwith, by proclamation, command such insurgents to disperse and retire peaceably to their respective abodes within a reasonable time.

“By the act of March 3, 1807, it is provided, ‘that in all cases of insurrection or obstruction to the laws, either of the United States or any individual State or Territory, where it is lawful for the President of the United States to call forth the militia for the purpose of suppressing such insurrection, or of causing the laws to be duly executed, it shall be lawful for him to employ for the same purpose, such part of the land or naval force of the United States as shall be judged necessary, having first observed all the prerequisites of the law in that respect.’

“This is the first occasion, so far as the government of a State and its people are concerned, on which it has become necessary to consider the propriety of exercising these high and most important Constitutional and legal functions. By a careful consideration of the above-recited acts of Congress, your excellency will not fail to see that no power is vested in the Executive of the United States to anticipate insurrectionary movements against the government of Rhode Island, so as to sanction the interposition of the military authority, but that there must be an actual insurrection, manifested by lawless assemblages of the people, or otherwise, to whom a proclamation may be addressed, and who may be required to betake themselves to their respective abodes. I have, however, to assure your excellency that, should the time arrive (and my fervent prayer is that it may never come) when an insurrection shall exist against the government of Rhode Island, and a requisition shall be made upon the Executive of the United States to furnish that protection which is guaranteed to each State by the Constitution and laws, I shall not be found to shrink from

the performance of a duty which, while it would be the most painful, is at the same time the most imperative. I have also to say that, in such a contingency, the Executive could not look into real or supposed defects of the existing government in order to ascertain whether some other plan of government proposed for adoption was better suited to the wants and more in accordance with the wishes of any portion of her citizens. To throw the Executive power of this Government into any such controversy would be to make the President the armed arbitrator between the people of the different States and their constituted authorities, and might lead to a usurped power, dangerous alike to the stability of the State governments and the liberties of the people.

"It will be my duty, on the contrary, to respect the requisitions of that government which has been recognized as the existing government of the State through all time past, until I shall be advised, in regular manner, that it has been altered and abolished, and another substituted in its place by legal and peaceable proceedings, adopted and pursued by the authorities and people of the State.

"Nor can I readily bring myself to believe that any such contingency will arise as shall render the interference of this Government at all necessary. The people of the State of Rhode Island have been too long distinguished for their love of order and of regular government to rush into revolution in order to obtain a redress of grievances, real or supposed, which a government under which their fathers lived in peace would not, in due season, redress. No portion of her people will be willing to drench her fair fields with the blood of their own brethren in order to obtain a redress of grievances which their constituted authorities can not, for any length of time, resist, if properly appealed to by the popular voice. None of them will be willing to set an example, in the bosom of this Union, of such frightful disorder, such needless convulsions of society,

such danger of life, liberty, and property, and likely to bring so much discredit on the character of popular governments. My reliance on the virtue, intelligence, and patriotism of her citizens is great and abiding, and I will not doubt but that a spirit of reconciliation will prevail over rash counsels, that all actual grievances will be promptly redressed by the existing government, and that another bright example will be added to the many already prevailing among the North American republics of change without revolution, and a redress of grievances without force or violence.

"I tender to your excellency assurances of my high respect and consideration.

JOHN TYLER.

"WASHINGTON, April 11, 1842."

A reward as big as all Rhode Island was offered for Dorr's arrest, whereupon he returned to Providence, was tried for treason, convicted, and sentenced to imprisonment for life. In 1847 he was pardoned, and things had so changed by 1852, that the Legislature restored his stupendous lost civil rights, and caused the record against him to be expunged. Poor Dorr lived to see the republican Government of the United States established in Rhode Island, the result of his labor and sufferings.

By far the most important event of Mr. Tyler's Administration at this time was the final settlement of the north-eastern boundary between the British possessions and the United States. The treaty negotiated by Mr. Webster on the part of the Government was ratified by the Senate on the 20th of August by a vote of thirty-nine to nine. The main features of this treaty will appear hereafter.

About the close of this session of Congress the President uttered these sentiments as to his own condition and determination :—

“A President elected by the people comes into office at the head of a triumphant party. His will is, for the most part, the law which governs his party. Responsible, under the Constitution, for the administration of public affairs, he recommends his measures and adopts his line of policy with every assurance of support. Not so, however, with a Vice-President who succeeds to the Presidency by the demise of the President. His name has mixed but little with the canvass, and has been selected more with reference to supposed sectional or local than to general influence. He has no party at his heels to sustain his measures or to aid him in his exertions for the public good. Instead of being a leader, he must be a follower of party, and he is required either to be a piece of wax, to be molded into any shape that others may please, or denunciations the loudest and boldest are in store for him. Has he long-cherished opinions which stand in the way of party measures, whether those measures be good or bad, wise or the opposite, they must be surrendered. Honor, conscience, everything esteemed sacred among men, must be yielded, or the thunders break over his head, and threaten annihilation. It is a fit occasion for the prevalence of faction, and the reliance of one thus situated can alone be on the patriotism and discernment of the people. Such, I frankly avow, is my steadfast reliance, and every effort of mind and body compatible with the public institutions shall be exerted to maintain our institutions under this new and hazardous experiment.

“There are other causes of great trial and difficulty by which the Administration is surrounded: private and public credit prostrated; industry in all its departments paralyzed; a treasury deficient in its supplies; a currency

broken up and disordered, and our foreign relations perplexed and embarrassed. Credit should be restored; industry reanimated; a sound currency provided through the direct exercise of Constitutional power, and the public peace preserved, if the same can be accomplished without a surrender of national honor. These objects will claim my undivided attention, and I will not permit myself to despair of their accomplishment."

It was the good fortune of Mr. Tyler to be able in part to redeem the odium that clings around the history of the dealings of the United States with the Seminole Indians. Although belonging to the slave section with its extreme and irreconcilable views of slavery, and standing himself on ultra enough grounds, mainly, he gave a ready support to the plan which appeared to be the only way to success, by treating with the "interests and feelings" of the Indians, and giving little heed to the clamor of politicians, or the doubtful representations, designs, and imperious and insulting demands of his section. He was able finally to fall in with the wider and juster views of General Worth, and early in May, 1842, sent a special communication to Congress recommending that the war be brought to an end at once, and provision be made to confine the Indians who chose to stay in Florida in as narrow limits as possible, and the others, as they showed inclination, to be sent to their Western home. General Worth was accordingly urged forward in his steps for peace and at last, in the fall of 1843, the unfortunate and disreputable war was ended. For his part in the work Worth was made a brigadier-general by brevet, and in other ways

President Tyler exhibited his genuine satisfaction with the result reached in this troublesome business. Indeed this satisfactory and summary ending of this fruitless and expensive Indian war, was a worthy achievement of this Administration, one about which there could be no division of opinion; one, too, for which, under the circumstances, Mr. Tyler deserved great credit. A full view of this last Seminole War and President Tyler's just and honorable connection with it may be seen in a preceding volume of this work.

CHAPTER XII.

SECOND ANNUAL MESSAGE—TREATY OF WASHINGTON—
MR. TYLER'S EXCHEQUER.

ON the 5th of December, 1842, Congress again convened, the session ending March 3, 1843. On the next day the President sent to that body his

SECOND ANNUAL MESSAGE.

December 6, 1842.

TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES:—

We have continued reason to express our profound gratitude to the great Creator of all things for numberless benefits conferred upon us as a people. Blessed with genial seasons, the husbandman has his garners filled with abundance; and the necessaries of life, not to speak of its luxuries, abound in every direction. While in some other nations steady and industrious labor can hardly find the means of subsistence, the greatest evil which we have to encounter is a surplus of production beyond the home demand, which seeks, and with difficulty finds, a partial market in other regions. The health of the country, with partial exceptions, has for the past year been well preserved; and, under their free and wise institutions, the United States are rapidly advancing toward the consummation of the high destiny which an overruling Providence seems to have marked out for them. Exempt from domestic convulsion, and at peace with all the world, we are left free to consult as to the best means of securing and advancing the happiness of the people. Such are the circumstances under which you now assemble in your respective chambers, and

which should lead us to unite in praise and thanksgiving to that great Being who made us and who preserves us as a Nation.

I congratulate you, fellow-citizens, on the happy change in the aspect of our foreign affairs since my last annual message. Causes of complaint at that time existed between the United States and Great Britain which, attended by irritating circumstances, threatened most seriously the public peace. The difficulty of adjusting amicably the questions at issue between the two countries was, in no small degree, augmented by the lapse of time since they had their origin. The opinions entertained by the Executive on several of the leading topics in dispute were frankly set forth in the message at the opening of your late session. The appointment of a special minister by Great Britain to the United States, with power to negotiate upon most of the points of difference, indicated a desire on her part amicably to adjust them, and that minister was met by the Executive in the same spirit which had dictated his mission. The treaty consequent thereon, having been duly ratified by the two governments, a copy, together with the correspondence which accompanied it, is herewith communicated. I trust that while you may see in it nothing objectionable, it may be the means of preserving for an indefinite period, the amicable relations happily existing between the two governments. The question of peace or war between the United States and Great Britain is a question of the deepest interest, not only to themselves, but to the civilized world, since it is scarcely possible that a war could exist between them without endangering the peace of Christendom. The immediate effect of the treaty upon ourselves will be felt in the security afforded to mercantile enterprise, which, no longer apprehensive of interruption, adventures its speculations in the most distant seas, and, freighted with the diversified productions of every land, returns to bless our own. There is nothing in the treaty which, in the slightest degree, compromises the honor or dignity of either nation. Next to the settlement of the boundary line, which must always be a matter of difficulty between States, as between individuals, the question which seemed to threaten the greatest embarrassment was that connected with the African slave-trade. By the tenth article of the Treaty of Ghent it was

expressly declared, that "Whereas, the traffic in slaves is irreconcilable with the principles of humanity and justice; and whereas, both his majesty and the United States are desirous of continuing their efforts to promote its entire abolition, it is hereby agreed that both the contracting parties shall use their best endeavors to accomplish so desirable an object." In the enforcement of the laws and treaty stipulations of Great Britain a practice had threatened to grow up on the part of its cruisers, of subjecting to visitation ships sailing under the American flag, which, while it seriously involved our maritime rights, would subject to vexation a branch of our trade which was daily increasing, and which required the fostering care of the Government. And although Lord Aberdeen, in his correspondence with the American envoys at London, expressly disclaimed all right to detain an American ship on the high seas, even if found with a cargo of slaves on board, and restricted the British pretension to a mere claim to visit and inquire, yet it could not well be discerned by the Executive of the United States how such visit and inquiry could be made without detention on the voyage, and consequent interruption to the trade. It was regarded as the right of search, presented only in a new form, and expressed in different words; and I, therefore, felt it to be my duty distinctly to declare, in my annual message to Congress, that no such concession could be made, and that the United States had both the will and the ability to enforce their own laws, and to protect their flag from being used for purposes wholly forbidden by those laws and obnoxious to the moral censure of the world.

Taking the message as his letter of instructions, our then Minister at Paris felt himself required to assume the same ground in a remonstrance which he felt it to be his duty to present to M. Guizot, and through him to the king of the French, against what has been called the quintuple treaty; and his conduct, in this respect, met with the approval of this Government. In close conformity with these views, the eighth article of the treaty was framed, which provides that "each nation shall keep afloat in the African seas a force of not less than eighty guns, to act separately and apart, under instructions from their respective governments, and for the enforcement of their

respective laws and obligations." From this it will be seen that the ground assumed in the message has been fully maintained, at the same time that the stipulations of the Treaty of Ghent are to be carried out in good faith by the two countries, and that all pretense is removed for interference with our commerce for any purpose whatever by a foreign government. While, therefore, the United States have been standing up for the freedom of the seas, they have not thought proper to make that a pretext for avoiding a fulfillment of their treaty stipulations, or a ground for giving countenance to a trade reprobated by our laws. A similar arrangement by the other great powers could not fail to sweep from the ocean the slave-trade, without the interpolation of any new principle into the maritime code. We may be permitted to hope that the example thus set will be followed by some, if not all, of them. We thereby also afford suitable protection to the fair trader in those seas, thus fulfilling, at the same time, the dictates of sound policy, and complying with the claims of justice and humanity.

It would have furnished additional cause for congratulation if the treaty could have embraced all subjects calculated in future to lead to a misunderstanding between the two governments. The territory of the United States, commonly called the Oregon Territory, lying on the Pacific Ocean, north of the forty-second degree of latitude, to a portion of which Great Britain lays claim, begins to attract the attention of our fellow-citizens, and the tide of population which has reclaimed what was so lately an unbroken wilderness, in more contiguous regions, is preparing to flow over those vast districts which stretch from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. In advance of the acquirement of individual rights to these lands, sound policy dictates that every effort should be resorted to by the two governments to settle their respective claims. It became manifest, at an early hour of the late negotiations, that any attempt, for the time being, satisfactorily to determine those rights, would lead to a protracted discussion, which might embrace in its failure other more pressing matters; and the Executive did not regard it as proper to waive all the advantages of an honorable adjustment of other difficulties of great magnitude and importance, because this, not so immediately

pressing, stood in the way. Although the difficulty referred to may not for several years to come involve the peace of the two countries, yet I shall not delay to urge on Great Britain the importance of an early settlement. Nor will other matters of commercial importance to the two countries be overlooked; and I have good reason to believe that it will comport with the policy of England, as it does with that of the United States, to seize upon this moment, when most of the causes of irritation have passed away, to cement the peace and unity of the two countries by wisely removing all grounds of probable future collision.

With the other powers of Europe our relations continue on the most amicable footing. Treaties now existing with them should be rigidly observed, and every opportunity, compatible with the interests of the United States, should be seized upon to enlarge the basis of commercial intercourse. Peace with all the world is the true foundation of our policy, which can only be rendered permanent by the practice of equal and impartial justice to all. Our great desire should be to enter only into that rivalry which looks to the general good, in the cultivation of the sciences, the enlargement of the field for the exercise of the mechanical arts, and the spread of commerce, that great civilizer, to every land and sea. Carefully abstaining from interference in all questions exclusively referring themselves to the political interests of Europe, we may be permitted to hope an equal exemption from the interference of European governments in what relates to the States of the American continent.

On the 23d of April last the commissioners on the part of the United States, under the convention with the Mexican Republic of the 11th of April, 1839, made, to the proper Department, a final report in relation to the proceedings of the commission. From this it appears that the total amount awarded to the claimants by the commissioners and the umpire appointed under that convention was two millions twenty-six thousand and seventy-nine dollars and sixty-eight cents. The arbiter having considered that his functions were required by the convention to terminate at the same time with those of the commissioners, returned to the board undecided, for want of time, claims which had been allowed by the American com-

missioners to the amount of nine hundred and twenty-eight thousand six hundred and twenty dollars and eighty-eight cents. Other claims, in which the amount sought to be recovered was three millions three hundred and thirty-six thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven dollars and five cents, were submitted to the board too late for its consideration. The Minister of the United States at Mexico has been duly authorized to make demand for the payment of the awards according to the terms of the convention, and the provisions of the act of Congress of the 12th of June, 1840. He has also been instructed to communicate to that government the expectations of the Government of the United States in relation to those claims which were not disposed of according to the provisions of the convention, and all others of citizens of the United States against the Mexican government.

He has also been furnished with other instructions, to be followed by him in case the government of Mexico should not find itself in a condition to make the present payment of the amount of the awards in specie or its equivalent.

I am happy to be able to say that information which is esteemed favorable both to a just satisfaction of the awards, and a reasonable provision for other claims, has been recently received from Mr. Thompson, the Minister of the United States, who has promptly and efficiently executed the instructions of his Government in regard to this important subject.

The citizens of the United States who accompanied the late Texan Expedition to Santa Fé, and who were wrongfully taken and held as prisoners of war in Mexico, have all been liberated.

A correspondence has taken place between the Department of State and the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs upon the complaint of Mexico that citizens of the United States were permitted to give aid to the inhabitants of Texas in the war existing between her and that Republic. Copies of this correspondence are herewith communicated to Congress, together with copies of letters on the same subject, addressed to the Diplomatic Corps at Mexico by the American Minister and the Mexican Secretary of State.

Mexico has thought proper to reciprocate the mission of the

United States to that government by accrediting to this a minister of the same rank as that of the Representative of the United States in Mexico. From the circumstances connected with his mission, favorable results are anticipated from it. It is so obviously for the interest of both countries as neighbors and friends that all just causes of mutual dissatisfaction should be removed, that it is to be hoped neither will omit or delay the employment of any practical and honorable means to accomplish that end.

The affairs pending between this Government and several others of the States of this hemisphere formerly under the dominion of Spain have again, within the past year, been materially obstructed by the military revolutions and conflicts in those countries.

The ratifications of the treaty between the United States and the Republic of Ecuador, of the 13th of June, 1839, have been exchanged, and that instrument has been duly promulgated on the part of this Government. Copies are now communicated to Congress, with a view to enable that body to make such changes in the laws applicable to our intercourse with that Republic as may be deemed requisite.

Provision has been made by the government of Chili for the payment of the claim on account of the illegal detention of the brig *Warrior* at Coquimbo, 1820. This Government has reason to expect that other claims of our citizens against Chili will be hastened to a final and satisfactory close.

The empire of Brazil has not been altogether exempt from those convulsions which so constantly afflict the neighboring republics. Disturbances which recently broke out are, however, now understood to be quieted. But these occurrences, by threatening the stability of the governments, or by causing incessant and violent changes in them, or in the persons who administer them, tend greatly to retard provisions for a just indemnity for losses and injuries suffered by individual subjects or citizens of other States. The Government of the United States will feel it to be its duty, however, to consent to no delay, not unavoidable, in making satisfaction for wrongs and injuries sustained by its own citizens. Many years having, in some cases, elapsed, a decisive and effectual course of proceed-

ing will be demanded of the respective governments against whom claims have been preferred.

The vexatious, harassing, and expensive war which has long prevailed with the Indian tribes inhabiting the peninsula of Florida has happily been terminated; whereby our army has been relieved from a service of the most disagreeable character, and the treasury from a large expenditure. Some casual outbreaks may occur, such as are incident to the close proximity of border settlers and the Indians; but these, as in all other cases, may be left to the care of the local authorities, aided, when occasion may require, by the forces of the United States. A sufficient number of troops will be maintained in Florida so long as the remotest apprehensions of danger shall exist; yet their duties will be limited rather to the garrisoning of the necessary posts than to the maintenance of active hostilities. It is to be hoped that a territory so long retarded in its growth will now speedily recover from the evils incident to a protracted war, exhibiting, in the increased amount of its rich productions, true evidences of returning wealth and prosperity. By the practice of rigid justice toward the numerous Indian tribes residing within our territorial limits, and the exercise of a parental vigilance over their interests, protecting them against fraud and intrusion, and at the same time using every proper expedient to introduce among them the arts of civilized life, we may fondly hope, not only to wean them from their love for war, but to inspire them with a love of peace and all its vocations. With several of the tribes great progress in civilizing them has already been made. The schoolmaster and the missionary are found side by side; and the remains of what were once numerous and powerful nations may yet be preserved as the builders-up of a new name for themselves and their posterity.

The balance in the treasury on the 1st of January, 1842 (exclusive of the amount deposited with the States, trust-funds, and indemnities), was two hundred and thirty thousand four hundred and eighty-three dollars and sixty-eight cents. The receipts into the treasury during the first three-quarters of the present year, from all sources, amount to twenty-six millions six hundred and sixteen thousand five hundred and

ninety-three dollars and seventy-eight cents, of which more than fourteen millions were received from customs, and about one million from the public lands. The receipts for the fourth quarter are estimated at nearly eight millions; of which four millions are expected from customs, and three and a half millions from loans and treasury-notes. The expenditures of the first three-quarters of the present year exceed twenty-six millions, and those estimated for the fourth quarter amount to about eight millions; and it is anticipated there will be a deficiency of half a million on the 1st of January next; but that the amount of outstanding warrants (estimated at three hundred thousand dollars) will leave an actual balance of about two hundred and twenty-four thousand dollars in the treasury. Among the expenditures of the year are more than eight millions for the public debt, and six hundred thousand dollars on account of the distribution to the States of the proceeds of sales of the public lands.

The present tariff of duties was somewhat hastily and hurriedly passed near the close of the late session of Congress. That it should have defects can, therefore, be surprising to no one. To remedy such defects as may be found to exist in many of its numerous provisions will not fail to claim your serious attention. It may well merit inquiry whether the exaction of all duties in cash does not call for the introduction of a system which has proved highly beneficial in countries where it has been adopted. I refer to the warehousing system. The first and most prominent effect which it would produce would be to protect the market alike against redundant or deficient supplies of foreign fabrics—both of which, in the long run, are injurious as well to the manufacturer as the importer. The quantity of goods in store being at all times readily known, it would enable the importer, with an approach to accuracy, to ascertain the actual wants of the market, and to regulate himself accordingly. If, however, he should fall into error, by importing an excess above the public wants, he could readily correct its evils by availing himself of the benefits and advantages of the system thus established. In the storehouse the goods imported would await the demands of the market, and their issues would be governed by the fixed principles of demand

and supply. Thus an approximation would be made to a steadiness and uniformity of price, which, if attainable, would conduce to the decided advantage of mercantile and mechanical operations.

The apprehension may be well entertained that without something to ameliorate the rigor of cash payments, the entire import trade may fall into the hands of a few wealthy individuals in this country and in Europe. The small importer, who requires all the money he can raise for investments abroad, and who can but ill afford to pay the lowest duty, would have to subduct in advance a portion of his funds in order to pay the duties, and would lose the interest upon the amount thus paid for all the time the goods might remain unsold, which might absorb his profits. The rich capitalist, abroad as well as at home, would thus possess, after a short time, an almost exclusive monopoly of the import trade, and laws designed for the benefit of all would thus operate for the benefit of the few—a result wholly uncongenial with the spirit of our institutions, and anti-republican in all its tendencies. The warehousing system would enable the importer to watch the market, and to select his own time for offering his goods for sale. A profitable portion of the carrying-trade in articles entered for the benefit of drawback must also be most seriously affected without the adoption of some expedient to relieve the cash system. The warehousing system would afford that relief, since the carrier would have a safe recourse to the public storehouses, and might, without advancing the duty, reship within some reasonable period to foreign ports. A further effect of the measure would be to supersede the system of drawbacks, thereby effectually protecting the Government against fraud, as the right of debentures would not attach to goods after withdrawal from the public stores.

In revising the existing tariff of duties, should you deem it proper to do so at your present session, I can only repeat the suggestions and recommendations which, upon several occasions, I have heretofore felt it to be my duty to offer to Congress. The great, primary, and controlling interest of the American people is union—union not only in the mere forms of Government, forms which may be broken, but union founded

in an attachment of States and individuals for each other. This union in sentiment and feeling can only be preserved by the adoption of that course of policy which, neither giving exclusive benefits to some, nor imposing unnecessary burdens upon others, shall consult the interests of all, by pursuing a course of moderation, and thereby seeking to harmonize public opinion, and causing the people everywhere to feel and to know that the Government is careful of the interests of all alike. Nor is there any subject in regard to which moderation, connected with a wise discrimination, is more necessary than in the imposition of duties on imports. Whether reference be had to revenue, the primary object in the imposition of taxes, or to the incidents which necessarily flow from their imposition, this is entirely true. Extravagant duties defeat their end and object, not only by exciting in the public mind an hostility to the manufacturing interests, but by inducing a system of smuggling on an extensive scale, and the practice of every manner of fraud upon the revenue, which the utmost vigilance of Government can not effectually suppress. An opposite course of policy would be attended by results essentially different, of which every interest of society, and none more than those of the manufacturer, would reap important advantages. Among the most striking of its benefits would be that derived from the general acquiescence of the country in its support, and the consequent permanency and stability which would be given to all operations of industry. It can not be too often repeated that no system of legislation can be wise which is fluctuating and uncertain. No interest can thrive under it. The prudent capitalist will never adventure his capital in manufacturing establishments, or in any other leading pursuit of life, if there exists a state of uncertainty as to whether the Government will repeal to-morrow what it has enacted to-day. Fitful profits, however high, if threatened with a ruinous reduction by a vacillating policy on the part of Government, will scarcely tempt him to trust the money which he has acquired by a life of labor upon the uncertain adventure. I, therefore, in the spirit of conciliation, and influenced by no other desire than to rescue the great interests of the country from the vortex of political contention, and in the discharge

of the high and solemn duties of the place which I now occupy, recommend moderate duties, imposed with a wise discrimination as to their several objects, as being not only most likely to be durable, but most advantageous to every interest of society.

The report of the Secretary of the War Department exhibits a very full and satisfactory account of the various and important interests committed to the charge of that officer. It is particularly gratifying to find that the expenditures for the military service are greatly reduced in amount; that a strict system of economy has been introduced into the service, and the abuses of past years greatly reformed. The fortifications on our maritime frontier have been prosecuted with much vigor, and at many points our defenses are in a very considerable state of forwardness. The suggestions in reference to the establishment of means of communication with our territories on the Pacific, and to the surveys so essential to a knowledge of the resources of the intermediate country, are entitled to the most favorable consideration. While I would propose nothing inconsistent with friendly negotiations to settle the extent of our claims in that region, yet a prudent forecast points out the necessity of such measures as may enable us to maintain our rights. The arrangements made for preserving our neutral relations on the boundary between us and Texas, and keeping in check the Indians in that quarter, will be maintained so long as circumstances may require.

For several years angry contentions have grown out of the disposition directed by law to be made of the mineral lands held by the Government in several of the States. The Government is constituted the landlord, and the citizens of the States wherein lie the lands are its tenants. The relation is an unwise one, and it would be much more conducive to the public interest that a sale of the lands should be made than that they should remain in their present condition. The supply of the ore would be more abundantly and certainly furnished when to be drawn from the enterprise and the industry of the proprietor than under the present system.

The recommendation of the Secretary in regard to the improvement of Western waters, and certain prominent harbors

on the lakes, merits, and I doubt not will receive, your serious attention. The great importance of these subjects to the prosperity of the extensive region referred to, and the security of the whole country in time of war, can not escape observation. The losses of life and property which annually occur in the navigation of the Mississippi alone, because of the dangerous obstructions in the river, make a loud demand upon Congress for the adoption of efficient measures for their removal. The report of the Secretary of the Navy will bring you acquainted with that important branch of the public defenses. Considering the already vast and daily-increasing commerce of the country, apart from the exposure to hostile inroad of an extended sea-board, all that relates to the navy is calculated to excite particular attention. Whatever tends to add to its efficiency, without entailing unnecessary charges upon the treasury, is well worthy of your serious consideration. It will be seen that while an appropriation exceeding by less than a million the appropriations of the present year is asked by the Secretary, yet that in this sum is proposed to be included four hundred thousand dollars for the purpose of clothing, which, when once expended, will be annually reimbursed by the sale of the clothes, and will thus constitute a perpetual fund, without any new appropriation to the same object. To this may also be added fifty thousand dollars to cover the arrearages of past years, and two hundred and fifty thousand dollars in order to maintain a competent squadron on the coast of Africa; all of which, when deducted, will reduce the expenditures nearly within the limits of those of the current year. While, however, the expenditures will thus remain very nearly the same as of the antecedent year, it is proposed to add greatly to the operations of the marine, and in lieu of only twenty-five ships in commission, and but little in the way of building, to keep, with the same expenditure, forty-one vessels afloat, and to build twelve ships of a small class.

A strict system of accountability is established, and great pains are taken to insure industry, fidelity, and economy in every department of duty. Experiments have been instituted to test the quality of various materials, particularly copper, iron, and coal, so as to prevent fraud and imposition.

It will appear, by the report of the Postmaster-General, that the great point which, for several years, has been so much desired, has, during the current year, been fully accomplished. The expenditures of the Department for the current year have been brought within its income without lessening its general usefulness. There has been an increase of revenue equal to one hundred and sixty-six thousand dollars for the year 1842 over that of 1841, without, as it is believed, any addition having been made to the number of letters and newspapers transmitted through the mails. The Post-office laws have been honestly administered; and fidelity has been observed in accounting for, and paying over, by the subordinates of the Department, the moneys which have been received. For the details of the service I refer you to the report.

I flatter myself that the exhibition thus made of the condition of the public administration will serve to convince you that every proper attention has been paid to the interests of the country by those who have been called to the heads of the different Departments. The reduction in the annual expenditures of the Government already accomplished furnishes a sure evidence that economy in the application of the public moneys is regarded as a paramount duty.

At peace with all the world; the personal liberty of the citizen sacredly maintained, and his rights secured under political institutions deriving all their authority from the direct sanction of the people; with a soil fertile almost beyond example, and a country blessed with every diversity of climate and production, what remains to be done in order to advance the happiness and prosperity of such a people? Under ordinary circumstances this inquiry could readily be answered. The best that probably could be done for a people inhabiting such a country, would be to fortify their peace and security in the prosecution of their various pursuits by guarding them against invasion from without and violence from within. The rest, for the greater part, might be left to their own energy and enterprise. The chief embarrassments which at the moment exhibit themselves have arisen from over-action; and the most difficult task which remains to be accomplished is that of correcting and overcoming its effects. Between the years 1833

and 1838 additions were made to bank capital and bank issues, in the form of notes designed for circulation, to an extent enormously great. The question seemed to be, not how the best currency could be provided, but in what manner the greatest amount of bank-paper could be put in circulation. Thus a vast amount of what was called money—since, for the time being, it answered the purposes of money—was thrown upon the country; an overissue, which was attended, as a necessary consequence, by an extravagant increase of the prices of all articles of property, the spread of a speculative mania all over the country; and has finally ended in a general indebtedness on the part of States and individuals, the prostration of public and private credit, a depreciation in the market value of real and personal estate, and has left large districts of country almost entirely without any circulating medium. In view of the fact that, in 1830, the whole bank-note circulation within the United States amounted to but sixty-one millions three hundred and twenty-three thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight dollars, according to the treasury statements, and that an addition had been made thereto of the enormous sum of eighty-eight millions of dollars in seven years (the circulation on the 1st of January, 1837, being stated at one hundred and forty-nine millions one hundred and eighty-five thousand eight hundred and ninety dollars), aided by the great facilities afforded in obtaining loans from European capitalists, who were seized with the same speculative mania which prevailed in the United States—and the large importations of funds from abroad, the result of stock-sales and loans—no one can be surprised at the apparent, but unsubstantial, state of prosperity which everywhere prevailed over the land; while as little cause of surprise should be felt at the present prostration of everything, and the ruin which has befallen so many of our fellow-citizens in the sudden withdrawal from circulation of so large an amount of bank issues since 1837—exceeding, as is believed, the amount added to the paper currency for a similar period antecedent to 1837—it ceases to be a matter of astonishment that such extensive shipwreck should have been made of private fortunes, or that difficulties should exist in meeting their engagements on the part of the debtor States. Apart

from which, if there be taken into account the immense losses sustained in the dishonor of numerous banks, it is less a matter of surprise that insolvency should have visited many of our fellow-citizens, than that so many should have escaped the blighting influences of the times.

In the solemn conviction of these truths, and with an ardent desire to meet the pressing necessities of the country, I felt it to be my duty to cause to be submitted to you, at the commencement of your late session, the plan of an exchequer, the whole power and duty of maintaining which, in purity and vigor, was to be exercised by the Representatives of the people and the States, and therefore virtually by the people themselves. It was proposed to place it under the control and direction of a treasury board, to consist of three commissioners, whose duty should be to see that the law of its creation was faithfully executed, and that the great end of supplying a paper medium of exchange, at all times convertible into gold and silver, should be attained. The board thus constituted was given as much permanency as could be imparted to it without endangering the proper share of responsibility which should attach to all public agents. In order to insure all the advantages of a well-matured experience, the commissioners were to hold their offices for the respective periods of two, four, and six years, thereby securing at all times in the management of the exchequer the services of two men of experience; and to place them in a condition to exercise perfect independence of mind and action, it was provided that their removal should only take place for actual incapacity or infidelity to the trust, and to be followed by the President with an exposition of the causes of such removal, should it occur. It was proposed to establish subordinate boards in each of the States, under the same limitations and restrictions of the power of removal, which, with the central board, should receive, safely keep, and disburse the public moneys; and in order to furnish a sound paper medium of exchange, the exchequer should retain of the revenues of the Government a sum not to exceed five millions of dollars in specie, to be set apart as required by its operations, and to pay the public creditor, at his own option, either in specie or treasury-notes of denominations not less than five nor

exceeding one hundred dollars, which notes should be redeemed at the several places of issue, and to be receivable at all times and everywhere in payment of Government dues; with a restraint upon such issue of bills that the same should not exceed the *maximum* of fifteen millions of dollars. In order to guard against all the hazards incident to fluctuations in trade, the Secretary of the Treasury was invested with authority to issue five millions of dollars of Government stock, should the same at any time be regarded as necessary, in order to place beyond hazard the prompt redemption of the bills which might be thrown into circulation; thus in fact making the issue of fifteen millions of dollars of exchequer bills rest substantially on ten millions of dollars; and keeping in circulation more than one and one-half dollars for every dollar in specie. When to this it is added that the bills are not only everywhere receivable in Government dues, but that the Government itself would be bound for their ultimate redemption, no rational doubt can exist that the paper which the exchequer would furnish would readily enter into the general circulation, and be maintained at all times at or above par with gold or silver; thereby realizing the great want of the age, and fulfilling the wishes of the people. In order to reimburse the Government the expenses of the plan, it was proposed to invest the exchequer with a limited authority to deal in bills of exchange, unless prohibited by the State in which an agency might be situated, having only thirty days to run, and resting on a fair and *bona fide* basis. The legislative will on this point might be so plainly announced as to avoid all pretext for partiality or favoritism. It was furthermore proposed to invest this treasury agent with authority to receive on deposit, to a limited amount, the specie funds of individuals, and to grant certificates therefor to be redeemed on presentation, under the idea, which is believed to be well founded, that such certificates would come in aid of the exchequer bills in supplying a safe and ample paper circulation. Or, if in place of the contemplated dealings in exchange, the exchequer should be authorized not only to exchange its bills for actual deposits of specie but for specie or its equivalent to sell drafts, charging therefor a small but reasonable premium, I can not doubt but that the benefits of the law would be

speedily manifested in the revival of the credit, trade, and business of the whole country. Entertaining this opinion, it becomes my duty to urge its adoption upon Congress, by reference to the strongest considerations of the public interests, with such alterations in its details as Congress may in its wisdom see fit to make.

I am well aware that this proposed alteration and amendment of the laws establishing the Treasury Department has encountered various objections, and that among others it has been proclaimed a Government bank of fearful and dangerous import. It is proposed to confer upon it no extraordinary powers. It purports to do no more than pay the debts of the Government with the redeemable paper of the Government—in which respect it accomplishes precisely what the Treasury does daily at this time in issuing to the public creditors the treasury-notes which, under law, it is authorized to issue. It has no resemblance to an ordinary bank, as it furnishes no profits to private stockholders, and lends no capital to individuals. If it be objected to as a Government bank, and the objection be available, then should all the laws in relation to the Treasury be repealed, and the capacity of the Government to collect what is due to it, or pay what it owes, be abrogated.

This is the chief purpose of the proposed exchequer; and surely if, in the accomplishment of a purpose so essential, it affords a sound circulating medium to the country, and facilities to trade, it should be regarded as no slight recommendation of it to public consideration. Properly guarded by the provisions of law, it can run into no dangerous evil, nor can any abuse arise under it but such as the Legislature itself will be answerable for, if it be tolerated; since it is but the creature of the law, and is susceptible at all times of modification, amendment, or repeal, at the pleasure of Congress. I know that it has been objected that the system would be liable to be abused by the Legislature, by whom alone it could be abused, in the party conflicts of the day; that such abuse would manifest itself in a change of the law which would authorize an excessive issue of paper for the purpose of inflating prices and winning popular favor. To that it may be answered, that the ascription of such a motive to Congress is altogether gratu-

itous and inadmissible. The theory of our institutions would lead us to a different conclusion. But a perfect security against a proceeding so reckless would be found to exist in the very nature of things. The political party which should be so blind to the true interests of the country as to resort to such an expedient would inevitably meet with a final overthrow in the fact that the moment the paper ceased to be convertible into specie, or otherwise promptly redeemed, it would become worthless, and would in the end dishonor the Government, involve the people in ruin, and such political party in hopeless disgrace. At the same time, such a view involves the utter impossibility of furnishing any currency other than that of the precious metals; for, if the Government itself can not forego the temptation of excessive paper issues, what reliance can be placed in corporations upon whom the temptation of individual aggrandizement would most strongly operate? The people would have to blame none but themselves for any injury that might arise from a course so reckless, since their agents would be the wrong-doers, and they the passive spectators.

There can be but three kinds of public currency: First, gold and silver; second, the paper of State institutions; or, third, a representative of the precious metals provided by the General Government, or under its authority. The Sub-Treasury system rejected the last in any form; and, as it was believed that no reliance could be placed on the issues of local institutions for the purposes of general circulation, it necessarily and unavoidably adopted specie as the exclusive currency for its own use. And this must ever be the case unless one of the other kinds be used. The choice, in the present state of public sentiment, lies between an exclusive specie currency on the one hand, and Government issues of some kind on the other. That these issues can not be made by a chartered institution is supposed to be conclusively settled. They must be made, then, directly by Government agents. For several years past they have been thus made in the form of treasury-notes, and have answered a valuable purpose. Their usefulness has been limited by their being transient and temporary; their ceasing to bear interest at given periods, necessarily causes their speedy return, and thus restricts their range of circulation, and, being

used only in the disbursements of the Government, they can not reach those points where they are most required. By rendering their use permanent, to the moderate extent already mentioned, by offering no inducement for their return, and by exchanging them for coin and other values, they will constitute, to a certain extent, the general currency so much needed to maintain the internal trade of the country. And this is the exchequer plan, so far as it may operate in furnishing a currency.

I can not forego the occasion to urge its importance to the credit of the Government in a financial point of view. The great necessity of resorting to every proper and becoming expedient in order to place the treasury on a footing of the highest respectability, is entirely obvious. The credit of the Government may be regarded as the very soul of the Government itself—a principle of vitality without which all its movements are languid, and all its operations embarrassed. In this spirit the Executive felt itself bound by the most imperative sense of duty to submit to Congress, at its last session, the propriety of making a specific pledge of the land fund, as the basis for the negotiation of the loans authorized to be contracted. I then thought that such an application of the public domain would, without doubt, have placed at the command of the Government ample funds to relieve the treasury from the temporary embarrassments under which it labored. American credit has suffered a considerable shock in Europe, from the large indebtedness of the States and the temporary inability of some of them to meet the interest on their debts. The utter and disastrous prostration of the United States Bank of Pennsylvania had contributed largely to increase the sentiment of distrust by reason of the loss and ruin sustained by the holders of its stock, a large portion of whom were foreigners, and many of whom were alike ignorant of our political organization, and of our actual responsibilities. It was the anxious desire of the Executive that in the effort to negotiate the loan abroad the American negotiator might be able to point the money-lender to the fund mortgaged for the redemption of the principal and interest of any loan he might contract, and thereby vindicate the Government from all suspicion of bad faith or inability to meet its

engagements. Congress differed from the Executive in this view of the subject. It became, nevertheless, the duty of the Executive to resort to every expedient in its power to negotiate the authorized loan. After a failure to do so in the American market, a citizen of high character and talent was sent to Europe with no better success; and thus the mortifying spectacle has been presented of the inability of this Government to obtain a loan so small as not in the whole to amount to more than one-fourth of its ordinary annual income, at a time when the governments of Europe, although involved in debt, and with their subjects heavily burdened with taxation, readily obtained loans of any amount at a greatly reduced rate of interest. It would be unprofitable to look further into this anomalous state of things; but I can not conclude without adding that, for a Government which has paid off its debts of two wars with the largest maritime power of Europe, and now owing a debt which is almost next to nothing when compared with its boundless resources, a Government the strongest in the world, because emanating from the popular will, and firmly rooted in the affections of a great and free people, and whose fidelity to its engagements has never been questioned; for such a Government to have tendered to the capitalists of other countries an opportunity for a small investment of its stocks, and yet to have failed, implies either the most unfounded distrust in its good faith, or a purpose, to obtain which the course pursued is the most fatal which could have been adopted. It has now become obvious to all men that the Government must look to its own means for supplying its wants; and it is consoling to know that these means are altogether adequate for the object. The exchequer, if adopted, will greatly aid in bringing about this result. Upon what I regard as a well-founded supposition that its bills would be readily sought for by the public creditors, and that the issue would in a short time reach the maximum of fifteen millions of dollars, it is obvious that ten millions of dollars would thereby be added to the available means of the treasury without cost or charge. Nor can I fail to urge the great and beneficial effect which would be produced in aid of all the active pursuits of life. Its effects upon the solvent State banks, while it would force into liquidation those of an opposite character,

through its weekly settlements, would be highly beneficial; and with the advantages of a sound currency the restoration of confidence and credit would follow, with a numerous train of blessings. My convictions are most strong that these benefits would flow from the adoption of this measure; but if the result should be adverse, there is this security in connection with it, that the law creating it may be repealed at the pleasure of the Legislature, without the slightest implication of its good faith.

I recommend to Congress to take into consideration the propriety of reimbursing a fine imposed on General Jackson at New Orleans at the time of the attack and defense of that city, and paid by him. Without designing any reflection on the judicial tribunal which imposed the fine, the remission at this day may be regarded as not unjust or inexpedient. The voice of the civil authority was heard amid the glitter of arms, and obeyed by those who held the sword, thereby giving additional luster to a memorable military achievement. If the laws were offended, their majesty was fully vindicated; and although the penalty incurred and paid is worthy of little regard in a pecuniary point of view, it can hardly be doubted that it would be gratifying to the war-worn veteran, now in retirement and in the winter of his days, to be relieved from the circumstances in which that judgment placed him. There are cases in which the public functionaries may be called on to weigh the public interest against their own personal hazards, and if the civil law be violated from praiseworthy motives, or an overruling sense of public danger and public necessity, punishment may well be restrained within that limit which asserts and maintains the authority of the law, and the subjection of the military to the civil power. The defense of New Orleans, while it saved the city from the hands of the enemy, placed the name of General Jackson among those of the greatest captains of the age, and illustrated one of the brightest pages of our history. Now that the causes of excitement existing at that time have ceased to operate, it is believed that the remission of this fine, and whatever of gratification that remission might cause the eminent man who incurred and paid it, would be in accordance with the general feeling and wishes of the American people.

I have thus, fellow-citizens, acquitted myself of my duty

under the Constitution, by laying before you, as succinctly as I have been able, the state of the Union, and by inviting your attention to measures of much importance to the country. The Executive will most zealously unite its efforts with those of the Legislative Department in the accomplishment of all that is required to relieve the wants of a common constituency, or elevate the destinies of a beloved country.

The important topics in this short and well-written message are the treaty with England and the plan of the exchequer. In the Treaty of Paris, 1783, the boundary separating the United States from the British possessions on the Massachusetts or north-eastern border was declared to be a line "along the highlands which divide the waters which empty themselves into the river St. Lawrence from those which fall into the Atlantic." This was, perhaps, plain enough, and easily determined, but when England came to find out that it would take in some of her forts and virtually commanded her approaches to Quebec, she determined not to adhere to the treaty as to this boundary. The subject was constantly under negotiation, but no advance was made. In the Treaty of Ghent in 1815, it was decided to submit the matter to a third power. The king of the Netherlands was selected. He executed the trust fairly, only cutting off a part of the extreme Maine border and opening a communication between Quebec and Nova Scotia, but preserving to the United States the main advantages of the treaty of 1783. Although England was ready to accept the result of this arbitration, the United States unwisely rejected it because it cut off a part of her territory.

In the Treaty of Washington, or the Ashburton Treaty, ratified towards the close of the last session of Congress, and which is now extolled by the President, and which was by no means generally acceptable throughout the country, the advantages were really on the side of Great Britain, mainly if not wholly. Lord Ashburton who negotiated the treaty with Mr. Webster received a vote of thanks from Parliament for his success, and not a single objection was made to it. This treaty cut off more of Maine than the king of Holland had awarded; obligated the United States to pay for Rouse's Point, which the Netherlands award had given to this country; left out the Oregon boundary question, which the President and his Cabinet desired to include; omitted the cases of the *Caroline* and the *Creole*, which never have been settled; and fixed the boundary from Lake Superior to Lake of the Woods south of that which had been held by this country. The old subject of impressment was also omitted, but since the War of 1812 there had really been little in this matter, as the British government only claimed the right to visit suspected vessels, a right she admitted to other powers.

The President now again comes forward with his exchequer financial plan, the Independent Treasury, with paper substituted for gold, the plan which really furnished the sinews of the Government in the War of the Rebellion. But this was no age for a paper money theory, and Mr. Tyler's plan met no favor in Congress. One of the first steps of this session was

the repeal of the Bankrupt Act. The majority for the repeal was very large in both Houses, and the President readily signed the bill.

A bill was introduced in the Senate providing for the colonizing of Oregon, granting lands to actual settlers, for a chain of posts from the Missouri River to the Rocky Mountains, providing for additional Indian Agents, and other matters looking to the general advancement and settlement of the far West. The bill passed the Senate by a close vote, but was not acted upon in the House.

Mr. Tyler's wise exchequer plan was fully set forth in his first annual message. Previously he had talked of the matter to L. W. Tazewell in the following letter, taken from the second volume of the "Letters and Times of the Tylers :"—

"WILLIAMSBURG, November 2, 1841.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I found here awaiting my arrival your deeply interesting letter of the 11th of October, and availing myself of the permission you have given me, I now submit to you somewhat more in detail a financial arrangement which has occurred to me as the most feasible which the times will justify the hope of passing. Let me premise that, however preferable other schemes may be, yet that, in the present state of parties, I am forced (so it seems to me) to accommodate my views to that which is likely to unite the greatest number in its support; for, however wise a measure might be in other respects, yet it would be an act of folly on the part of a public man to press it when there existed an apparent certainty that it would be received with invective and denunciation from all quarters.

"I should be drawn very strongly in favor of a plan

of either creating a bank in Washington of limited capital, say five millions of dollars, or selecting one in New York as the exclusive depository of the public funds, and leaving it to such bank to select its own agents without the grant of the Government of one particle more of power than its local charter confers, upon the condition of full security being furnished in the form of Government stock, and the further condition of its being subjected to a bankrupt law; but this would be assailed, I fear, with all the fury of faction, and might prove in the end destructive of the hopes of the Administration of being useful to the country. The notes of such bank being receivable everywhere for Government dues, would furnish a currency, as near as is attainable, of uniform value, and would, moreover, present the great desideratum of a separation of the sword from the purse. It would present a new organization and arrangement, and would, most probably, receive the support of the numberless stockholders in State banks; but then it would be liable to all fluctuations in trade, under individual control, and might run the race of cupidity and avarice, and finally overwhelm the country in ruin. The Bankrupt Law would act as a great check, it is true; but when we see so many in all the walks of life, who, with a jail on one hand and some deceptive allurements on the other, chase the deception until they find themselves deceived and ruined, we have cause to fear that an association of individuals would be neither wiser nor better. A death's-head has no terror for a man in pursuit of pleasure, any more than a Bankrupt Law would deter men from running in pursuit of real or imaginary profits. Other limitations and restrictions might, it is true, be brought to bear in aid of the terror of a Bankrupt Law.

Can any other scheme possessing more safety be resorted to? Theory would answer affirmatively, however practice might contradict its promises. The first great object is,

while furnishing a circulation, to avoid expansions and contractions. Now, with the whole matter of the currency in the hands of the Government, one would suppose that all was secure. The quantity of paper thrown into circulation could only be increased by law. The two Houses of Congress must concur, and the President must approve, and if the issue in the first instance was wisely limited in amount and made to rest on an unquestionable demand, the fluctuation in trade would scarcely reach it. I suggested that fifteen millions of dollars of exchequer bills might readily and safely be thrown into circulation and maintained in circulation. Your idea was that that would depend upon the single fact whether they would be above the par value of the precious metals. That such would be the fact, I do not doubt. They would everywhere be at a premium, because they would be receivable everywhere in payment of Government dues; would not only rest upon specie collected in advance of their issue, and for which they would be the substitute, but the faith of the Government would be pledged for their redemption. They might, by way of greater security, be made redeemable in specie at the place of issue, viz., the issues of New York redeemable in New York, etc. Now for the machinery. The greatest difficulty is in the outset. A board of control at Washington, with agencies at prominent points, not more than ten or twelve, with State banks elsewhere, gives you the general outline—the agencies being the Treasury, to which power might be granted to receive deposits of gold and silver, and issue certificates, which, of themselves, would enter into circulation at a decided premium, and for which the agency would be entitled to a limited premium. It would be necessary to restrict the amount to be received on deposit, in order to guard the State bank system from utter and hopeless prostration at any moment of reverse. The powers might even still further be enlarged (of which I am in much doubt) by

authorizing the agencies, unless prohibited by the State where located (see the case of *The Bank of Augusta v. Earle*, in Peters's Reports), to purchase bills of exchange drawn in one State and payable in another, and resting on a really substantial basis, with not more than sixty days to run. I have proposed the use of State banks in union with the agencies, in doing which I frankly confess that I am greatly influenced by a desire to bring to my support that great interest.

"I said that the difficulty was at the outset. How is the board of control and their subordinates to be placed beyond the reach of the Executive power? That unfortunate concession to the President of the power to remove stands in the way of everything. What if the commissions were made to run for a given term, instead of being, as now, at the pleasure of the President? Can the two Houses elect? or would it do to confer the offices during good behavior? Unless some such or more available expedient be presented, the charge of the union of the purse and the sword will ring over the whole land. Many more reflections occur to me which I should like to commit to paper for your review, but I have already trespassed much on you, for which I can only plead my great solicitude to have your views. I will only add one remark more, and then relieve you with the expression of a hope that I may hear from you at your earliest leisure. Your position taken in conversation was, that good paper would be driven out of circulation by more indifferent. This is true in the general, but is not so considering the condition of the currency now. In many places it is so bad that no one will receive it, and everywhere it is received with reluctance.

"Do, my dear sir, turn over your Sibyl leaves and read to me their recorded prophecies. If they augur very badly for me, I may, by being forewarned, become forearmed. Your early prophecy was of infinite service to me from the moment of my assuming the helm, as without it my ship,

already tempest-tossed, might, ere this, have been stranded. I am in the condition of Macbeth, without either his ambition or his vices, or other care than to acquit myself with some little honor for my remaining brief career of public life; but I would fain consult the weird sisters or their interpreters, and I know of no one more fully possessed of their counsels as to political events than yourself. If storms are to continue to assail, I would seek to reef my sails and adopt other precautions in order to live out the gale.

"I pray you, my dear sir, to be assured of nothing more fully than of my sincere friendship and esteem.

"JOHN TYLER."

Of this financial plan Lyon G. Tyler says in his "Letters and Times of the Tylers:"—

"The bill conformed to a pure governmental arrangement like the postal service of the Union. It had three principal objects in view:—

"1st. The safe-keeping of the Government moneys.

"2d. The furnishing, as well for safe and convenient payments to the treasury as for the use of the country, a paper circulation always equivalent to gold and silver, and of universal credit.

"3d. A provision for supplying, to some extent, the means of a cheap and safe exchange in the commerce between the several States.

"The measure avoided extremes on both sides. It did not attempt to collect a capital by means of private subscription for the general purposes of loans and discounts, and, therefore, did not propose to perform the ordinary functions of a bank. On the other hand, it did not confine the currency exclusively to a specie currency, as the Independent Treasury did, or make no attempt to furnish the country with facilities of exchange. A board of control in the city of Washington and agencies in the

States comprised the essential features of the system. The charge of the union of the 'sword and purse,' which had been brought against the Independent Treasury, was avoided by several very ingenious provisions. The President was forbidden to touch a dollar of the public money by his own authority, or change its custody. The Secretary of the Treasury could only do so to meet the occasion of the public service or by a public official act. The board itself was so constituted as to give the majority of its members a commission for a fixed term, one vacancy occurring every two years. For the purpose of a circulating medium, the exchequer was allowed to issue treasury-notes to an amount not exceeding fifteen million dollars. At the several agencies private deposits were allowed, and certificates grantable therefor, which then might circulate as so many bank-notes, redeemable at the agency whence issued. A charge of a half per cent was authorized for the care of these deposits, to meet, in part at least, the cost of the establishment. A reserved fund of Government stock, not exceeding in amount five millions of dollars, was left to the discretion of the Secretary of the Treasury."

CHAPTER XIII.

JOHN C. FREMONT MAKES HIS FIRST EXPEDITION TO OREGON—PRESIDENT TYLER AND THE CABINET—THE PRINCETON—CHINA AND MR. CUSHING—THIRD ANNUAL MESSAGE—THE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH—TEXAS AND 54° 40'.

DURING the summer of 1842 John C. Fremont, under the patronage of the President, made his first grand tour for exploring the Pacific slope. Of this expedition Mr. Benton wrote as follows:—

“Supplied with the best astronomical and barometrical instruments, well qualified to use them, and accompanied by twenty-five *voyageurs*, enlisted for the purpose at St. Louis, and trained to all the hardships and dangers of the prairies and the mountains, Mr. Fremont left the mouth of the Kansas, on the frontiers of Missouri, on the 10th of June; and, in the almost incredibly short space of four months, returned to the same point, without an accident to a man, and with a vast mass of useful observations, and many hundred specimens in botany and geology.

“In executing his instructions, Mr. Fremont proceeded up the Kansas River far enough to ascertain its character, and then crossed over to the Great Platte, and pursued that river to its source in the mountains, where the Sweet Water (a head branch of the Platte) issues from the neighborhood of the South Pass. He reached the Pass on the 8th of August, and describes it as a wide and

low depression of the mountains, where the ascent is as easy as that of the hill on which this Capitol stands, and where a plainly beaten wagon-road leads to the Oregon, through the valley of Lewis's River, a fork of the Columbia. He went through the Pass, and saw the headwaters of the Colorado, of the Gulf of California; and, leaving the valleys to indulge a laudable curiosity, and to make some useful observations, and attended by four of his men, he climbed the loftiest peak of the Rocky Mountains, until then untrodden by any known human being; and, on the 15th of August, looked down upon ice and snow some thousand feet below, and traced in the distance the valleys of the rivers which, taking their rise in the same elevated ridge, flow in opposite directions to the Pacific Ocean and to the Mississippi. From that ultimate point he returned by the valley of the Great Platte, following the stream in its whole course, and solving all questions in relation to its navigability, and the character of the country through which it flows.

"Over the whole course of this extended route barometrical observations were made by Mr. Fremont, to ascertain elevations both of the plains and of the mountains; astronomical observations were taken, to ascertain latitudes and longitudes; the face of the country was marked as arable or sterile; the facility of traveling, and the practicability of routes, noted; the grand features of nature described, and some presented in drawings; military positions indicated; and a large contribution to geology and botany was made in the varieties of plants, flowers, shrubs, trees, and grasses, and rocks and earths, which were enumerated. Drawings of some grand and striking points, and a map of the whole route, illustrate the report, and facilitate the understanding of its details. Eight carts, drawn by two mules each, accompanied the expedition; a fact which attests the facility of traveling in this vast region. Herds of buffaloes furnished subsistence to the

men; a short, nutritious grass sustained the horses and mules. Two boys (one of twelve years of age, the other of eighteen), besides the enlisted men, accompanied the expedition, and took their share of its hardships; which proves that boys, as well as men, are able to traverse the country to the Rocky Mountains."

The partial action of Congress, and the countenance of the President, were enough to start anew the tide of emigration, and during this and the next year a large number of new settlers reached Oregon; and again, after the treaty of 1845, the stream set in which has not yet been turned aside.

In his annual message the President had recommended the refunding of the fine paid by General Jackson by order of obstreperous old Judge Hall, at New Orleans, at the close of the War of 1812. A bill was introduced for carrying out this recommendation, and passed by a large majority in the House, and by a vote of twenty-eight to twenty in the Senate. Near the close of this session a bill was brought before the House for opening diplomatic relations for the first time with China. The appropriations were made for this purpose after attaching to the bill the strange condition that no agent should be appointed by the President alone without the consent of the Senate. This was one of the many steps designed to "head Captain Tyler." Towards the close of this session Mr. Tyler had three times nominated Henry A. Wise to be Minister to France, but the Senate refused to confirm him. Caleb Cushing was as many times nominated for Secretary of the

Treasury, and as many times rejected by the Senate. And this accounted for the President sending in no nomination for the China mission, as well as from the insulting and erroneous precautions of the Senate in the appropriation bill.

Before the close of the short session of Congress Mr. Forward resigned his place in the Cabinet, and Mr. Spencer was transferred to the Treasury Department, his confirmation being secured by only one vote. Matters were now taking such shape in the affairs of Mr. Tyler as to make a complete reorganization of his Cabinet necessary. Mr. Webster had evidently approached the end of his usefulness and harmony in the Administration. On the 11th of May, 1843, he offered his resignation, which was gladly accepted.

Mr. Webster had upheld President Tyler's views as to the "Dorr Rebellion," and in the main found little ground for serious objection to the course of Mr. Tyler either as towards himself or in the affairs of the Administration. The following statement from his speech in Faneuil Hall, September 30, 1842, shows his view of Mr. Tyler's *exchequer* plan:—

"The subject of the currency has been the study of my life. . . . And I take the responsibility of saying that the measure then submitted to Congress was the best and the only measure for the adoption of Congress and trial by the people. I am ready to stake my reputation—and it is all I have to stake—upon it, and that if the Whig Congress take the measure, and give it a fair trial for three years, it will be admitted by the whole American

people to have proved the most beneficial institution ever established, the Constitution only excepted."

But there were not wanting feelings of cordiality and respect between Mr. Webster and the President, even at the end, and on another page it may be shown that Mr. Tyler never ceased to hold his first Secretary of State in high esteem. In the Webster-Ashburton or Washington Treaty Mr. Tyler always claimed that to himself was due a great part of the credit of the result reached. And no doubt he did much in regulating the moods of, and urging forward the fretful, negotiators. His humor and perseverance appeared to be much better than Mr. Webster's, in the difficult task, and his suggestions were beneficial at every step. Mr. Tyler and some of his defenders decidedly held that the Webster-Ashburton Treaty was on the whole greatly to the advantage of this country and much superior to the Netherlands award.

Hugh Swinton Legaré, the Attorney-General, took the supervision of the State Department in May, 1843. And in the following month the President and his Cabinet visited Boston to be present at the celebration of the completion of the Bunker Hill Monument. Mr. Tyler was received throughout this tour with a consideration awarded General Jackson and other Presidents who had made visits to distant parts of the country. But the trip had a sad ending in the sudden death of Mr. Legaré at the house of his friend, George Ticknor. Mr. Legaré left the Democrats during the Administration of Van Buren,

and at the election of 1840 acted with the Whigs. He was an able man, and well esteemed by both parties.

In July the Cabinet was reorganized with Abel P. Upshur, of Virginia, in the State Department; John C. Spencer, in the Treasury; James M. Porter, of Pennsylvania, Secretary of War; David Henshaw, of Massachusetts, Secretary of the Navy; John Nelson, of Maryland, Attorney-General; and Mr. Wickliffe still remaining in the Post-office Department. But this arrangement was not satisfactory to the Senate, and after standing for several months, Porter and Henshaw withdrew for want of confirmation. Strangely enough another Virginian was now nominated, Thomas W. Gilmer, one of the "corporal's guard," and was confirmed as Secretary of the Navy, February 15, 1844. William Wilkins, of Pennsylvania, was confirmed as Secretary of War. This arrangement was also of short duration. On the morning of the 28th of February, 1844, a party, consisting of the President, his Cabinet, Members of Congress, Mrs. Madison, and a number of other persons, women and men, started on the new war steamer, *Princeton*, for a trip down the Potomac, by the invitation of Commodore Stockton. The *Princeton* had two great guns, throwing balls of two hundred and twenty-five pounds. The trip was mainly designed to witness the workings of the new vessel and these guns. About four o'clock in the evening when approaching the navy-yard the company was called to witness the last firing of the "Peacemaker," one

of the big guns. The gun exploded, wounding many of the sailors and a few others, among whom were Mr. Benton and Commodore Stockton, and killing Gilmer and Upshur, two members of the Cabinet, Commodore Kennon, Virgil Maxey, and David Gardiner, of New York, also a servant of Mr. Tyler, who himself escaped death, perhaps, by being detained by some trivial affair in the cabin where were Mrs. Madison and most of the other "ladies" of the company.

John C. Calhoun, one of the two living members of Mr. Monroe's Cabinet, was now appointed Secretary of State, although his selection was not made by President Tyler. In the meantime, however, Mr. Nelson, Attorney-General, acted as Secretary of State, and Commodore Lewis Warrington as Secretary of the Navy. John Y. Mason, of Virginia, was appointed Secretary of the Navy, and the Senate immediately confirmed both him and Mr. Calhoun. In May, 1844, Mr. Spencer resigned his place at the head of the Treasury Department, and George M. Bibb, of Kentucky, became his successor. From this time forward to the end of Mr. Tyler's term, the Cabinet remained as follows :

John C. Calhoun, appointed March 6, 1844, Secretary of State; George M. Bibb, appointed June 15, 1844, Secretary of the Treasury; William Wilkins, appointed February 15, 1844, Secretary of War; John Young Mason, appointed March 14, 1844, Secretary of the Navy; Charles A. Wickliffe, appointed September 13, 1841, Postmaster-General;

John Nelson, appointed July 1, 1843, Attorney-General; and finally Mr. Mason of the Navy was transferred at the close of the term, to the Attorney-General's office, by arrangement to continue and represent Mr. Tyler in the new Administration. Mr. Porter and David Henshaw were Democrats, and as the Senate refused to confirm them they only remained in the Cabinet from the time of their appointment till the following session of Congress. Mr. Nelson was also a Democrat. Legaré and the others, with the exception of Mr. Calhoun, were, or had been Whigs or conservatives.

During the last session, as has been seen, Congress made appropriations for an outfit for a representative of this Government to China for the first time. The President did not at the time make an appointment for this place. For it he designed Caleb Cushing, whom the Senate had rejected for the Treasury. Well he knew that Mr. Cushing, who was especially obnoxious to both sides of the Senate, would not be confirmed for this mission, and meant to send him, contrary to all provisions against it, during the recess of Congress. Mr. Cushing had left his party, and, to some extent, left himself, to support Mr. Tyler at every step and in every condition, and in some way the President was determined to reward him. He even gratified Mr. Cushing's vanity in starting him on his mission on the steam frigate *Missouri*, down the Potomac from the Capital, and surrounded him with every expense and ceremony on the way, to comport with the grand follies and trifling pageantry

of the "Central Flowery Kingdom." Mr. Cushing did not know, or care to know, how to deal with the peculiar people of China, and his conduct, whether founded upon instructions or not, was, much of it, unwise in the extreme, especially in attempting to force his person upon forbidden grounds, and compel the recognition of the objects of his Government, contrary to the very justly and moderately expressed interdiction of China, and at the risk of war with that country. But in a very short time Mr. Cushing met with unexpected success, and a satisfactory treaty was secured. Mr. Benton thus speaks of this mission :—

"The publication of Mr. Cushing's correspondence, which was ordered by the Senate, excited astonishment, and attracted the general reprobation of the country. Their contents were revolting, and would have been incredible except for his own revelations. Narrated by himself they coerced belief, and bespoke an organization void of the moral sense, and without the knowledge that any body else possessed it. The conduct of the negotiator was condemned, his treaty was ratified, and the proceedings on his nomination remained a senatorial secret—the injunction of secrecy having never been removed from them."

The same unfriendly writer says, in speaking of the President's condition at the beginning of the next session of Congress :—

"The Tyler party was 'nowhere'—Mr. Wise alone being classified as such ; the rest, so few in number as to have been called the 'corporal's guard,' had been left out of Congress by their constituents, or had received office from

Mr. Tyler and gone off. Mr. Caleb McNulty, of Ohio, also Democratic, was elected clerk of the House, and by a vote of two to one, thus ousting an experienced and capable Whig officer, in the person of Mr. Matthew St. Clair Clarke—a change which turned out to be unfortunate for the friends of the House, and mortifying to those who did it, the new clerk becoming a subject of indictment for embezzlement before his service was over.”

On the 4th of December, 1843, Congress convened. Although the Democrats now had a large majority in the House, it was by no means an Administration majority. In a close party vote the Senate was still Whig. John W. Jones, of Virginia, was elected Speaker over John White by a vote of one hundred and twenty-eight to fifty-nine. The Congressional elections in Missouri, Georgia, Mississippi, and New Hampshire had not been held according to a recent act of Congress, and accordingly the Whigs protested against the admission of the members sent from those States, but they were admitted to the seats they claimed all the same. By his private secretary, John Tyler, Jr., the President now sent to Congress this admirably short

THIRD ANNUAL MESSAGE.

December 5, 1843.

TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES:—

If any people ever had cause to render up thanks to the Supreme Being for parental care and protection extended to them in all the trials and difficulties to which they have been from time to time exposed, we certainly are that people. From the first settlement of our forefathers on this continent; through

the dangers attendant upon the occupation of a savage wilderness; through a long period of colonial dependence; through the War of the Revolution; in the wisdom which led to the adoption of the existing forms of Republican Government; in the hazards incident to a war subsequently waged with one of the most powerful nations of earth; in the increase of our population; in the spread of the arts and sciences, and in the strength and durability conferred on political institutions emanating from the people and sustained by their will—the superintendence of an overruling Providence has been plainly visible. As preparatory, therefore, to entering once more upon the high duties of legislation, it becomes us humbly to acknowledge our dependence upon him as our guide and protector, and to implore a continuance of his parental watchfulness over our beloved country. We have new cause for the expression of our gratitude in the preservation of the health of our fellow-citizens, with some partial and local exceptions, during the past season; for the abundance with which the earth has yielded up its fruits to the labors of the husbandman; for the renewed activity which has been imparted to commerce; for the revival of trade in all its departments; for the increased rewards attendant upon the exercise of the mechanic arts; for the continued growth of our population, and the rapidly reviving prosperity of the whole country. I shall be permitted to exchange congratulations with you, gentlemen of the two Houses of Congress, on these auspicious circumstances; and to assure you, in advance, of my ready disposition to concur with you in the adoption of all such measures as shall be calculated to increase the happiness of our constituents, and to advance the glory of our common country.

Since the last adjournment of Congress the Executive has relaxed no effort to render indestructible the relations of amity which so happily exist between the United States and other countries. The treaty lately concluded with Great Britain has tended greatly to increase the good understanding which a reciprocity of interests is calculated to encourage; and it is most ardently to be hoped that nothing may transpire to interrupt the relations of amity which it is so obviously the policy of both nations to cultivate.

A question of much importance still remains to be adjusted between them. The territorial limits of the two countries in relation to what is commonly known as the Oregon Territory still remain in dispute. The United States would be at all times indisposed to aggrandize themselves at the expense of any other nation; but while they would be restrained by principles of honor, which should govern the conduct of nations as well as that of individuals, from setting up a demand for territory which does not belong to them, they would as unwillingly consent to a surrender of their rights. After the most rigid and, as far as practicable, unbiased examination of the subject, the United States have always contended that their rights appertain to the entire region of country lying on the Pacific, and embraced within 42° and $54^{\circ} 40'$ of north latitude. This claim being controverted by Great Britain, those who have preceded the present Executive—actuated, no doubt, by an earnest desire to adjust the matter upon terms mutually satisfactory to both countries—have caused to be submitted to the British government propositions for settlement and final adjustment; which, however, have not proved heretofore acceptable to it. Our Minister at London has, under instructions, again brought the subject to the consideration of that government; and, while nothing will be done to compromise the rights or honor of the United States, every proper expedient will be resorted to in order to bring the negotiation, now in the progress of resumption, to a speedy and happy termination. In the meantime it is proper to remark that many of our citizens are either already established in the territory, or are on their way thither, for the purpose of forming permanent settlements, while others are preparing to follow; and, in view of these facts, I must repeat the recommendation contained in previous messages for the establishment of military posts at such places on the line of travel as will furnish security and protection to our hardy adventurers against hostile tribes of Indians inhabiting those extensive regions. Our laws should also follow them, so modified as the circumstances of the case may seem to require. Under the influence of our free system of Government new republics are destined to spring up, at no distant day, on the shores of the Pacific, similar in policy and in feeling to those

existing on this side of the Rocky Mountains, and giving a wider and more extensive spread to the principles of civil and religious liberty.

I am happy to inform you that the cases which have from time to time arisen, of the detention of American vessels by British cruisers on the coast of Africa, under pretense of being engaged in the slave-trade, have been placed in a fair train of adjustment. In the case of the *William and Francis* full satisfaction will be allowed. In the cases of the *Tygris* and *Seamew* the British government admits that satisfaction is due. In the case of the *Jones* the sum accruing from the sale of that vessel and cargo will be paid to the owners, while I can not but flatter myself that full indemnification will be allowed for all damages sustained by the detention of the vessel; and in the case of the *Douglass* her majesty's government has expressed its determination to make indemnification. Strong hopes are therefore entertained that most, if not all of these cases, will be speedily adjusted. No new cases have arisen since the ratification of the Treaty of Washington; and it is confidently anticipated that the slave-trade, under the operation of the eighth article of that treaty, will be altogether suppressed.

The occasional interruption experienced by our fellow-citizens engaged in the fisheries on the neighboring coast of Nova Scotia has not failed to claim the attention of the Executive. Representations upon this subject have been made; but as yet no definite answer to those representations has been received from the British government.

Two other subjects of comparatively minor importance, but nevertheless of too much importance to be neglected, remain still to be adjusted between the two countries. By the treaty between the United States and Great Britain of July, 1815, it is provided that no higher duties shall be levied in either country, on articles imported from the other, than on the same articles imported from any other place. In 1836 rough rice, by act of Parliament, was admitted from the coast of Africa into Great Britain on the payment of a duty of one penny a quarter; while the same article from all other countries, including the United States, was subjected to the payment of a duty

of twenty shillings a quarter. Our Minister at London has, from time to time, brought this subject to the attention of the British government, but, so far, without success. He is instructed to renew his representations upon it.

Some years since, a claim was preferred against the British government on the part of certain American merchants, for the return of export duties paid by them on shipments of woollen goods to the United States, after the duty on similar articles exported to other countries had been repealed, and consequently in contravention of the commercial convention between the two nations securing to us equality in such cases. The principle on which the claim rests has long since been virtually admitted by Great Britain; but obstacles to a settlement have from time to time been interposed, so that a large portion of the amount claimed has not yet been refunded. Our minister is now engaged in the prosecution of the claim, and I can not but persuade myself that the British government will no longer delay its adjustment.

I am happy to be able to say that nothing has occurred to disturb in any degree the relations of amity which exist between the United States and France, Austria, and Russia, as well as with the other powers of Europe, since the adjournment of Congress. Spain has been agitated with internal convulsions for many years, from the effects of which, it is hoped, she is destined speedily to recover; when, under a more liberal system of commercial policy on her part, our trade with her may again fill its old and (so far as her continental possessions are concerned) its almost forsaken channels; thereby adding to the mutual prosperity of the two countries.

The Germanic association of customs and commerce, which, since its establishment in 1833, has been steadily growing in power and importance, and consists at this time of more than twenty German states, and embraces a population of twenty-seven millions of people united for all the purposes of commercial intercourse with each other and with foreign states, offers to the latter the most valuable exchanges on principles more liberal than are offered in the fiscal system of any other European power. From its origin, the importance of the German union has never been lost sight of by the United States. The

industry, morality, and other valuable qualities of the German nation, have always been well known and appreciated. On this subject I invite the attention of Congress to the report of the Secretary of State, from which it will be seen that, while our cotton is admitted free of duty, and the duty on rice has been much reduced (which has already led to a greatly increased consumption), a strong disposition has been recently evinced by that great body to reduce, upon certain conditions, their present duty upon tobacco. This being the first intimation of a concession on this interesting subject ever made by any European power, I can not but regard it as well calculated to remove the only impediment which has so far existed to the most liberal commercial intercourse between us and them. In this view, our minister at Berlin, who has heretofore industriously pursued the subject, has been instructed to enter upon the negotiation of a commercial treaty, which, while it will open new advantages to the agricultural interests of the United States, and a more free and expanded field for commercial operations, will affect injuriously no existing interest of the Union. Should the negotiation be crowned with success, its results will be communicated to both Houses of Congress.

I communicate herewith certain dispatches received from our Minister at Mexico, and also a correspondence which has recently occurred between the envoy from that Republic and the Secretary of State. It must be regarded as not a little extraordinary that the government of Mexico, in anticipation of a public discussion (which it has been pleased to infer, from newspaper publications, as likely to take place in Congress, relating to the annexation of Texas to the United States), should so far have anticipated the result of such discussion as to have announced its determination to visit any such anticipated decision by a formal declaration of war against the United States. If designed to prevent Congress from introducing that question as a fit subject for its calm deliberation and final judgment, the Executive has no reason to doubt that it will entirely fail of its object. The Representatives of a brave and patriotic people will suffer no apprehension of future consequences to embarrass them in the course of their proposed

deliberations. Nor will the Executive Department of the Government fail, for any such cause, to discharge its whole duty to the country.

The war which has existed for so long a time between Mexico and Texas has, since the battle of San Jacinto, consisted, for the most part, of predatory incursions, which, while they have been attended with much of suffering to individuals, and have kept the borders of the two countries in a state of constant alarm, have failed to approach to any definitive result. Mexico has fitted out no formidable armament, by land or by sea, for the subjugation of Texas. Eight years have now elapsed since Texas declared her independence of Mexico; and, during that time, she has been recognized as a sovereign power by several of the principal civilized States. Mexico, nevertheless, perseveres in her plans of conquest, and refuses to recognize her independence. The predatory incursions to which I have alluded have been attended, in one instance, with the breaking up of the courts of justice, by the seizing upon the persons of the judges, jury, and officers of the court, and dragging them along with unarmed and therefore non-combatant citizens into a cruel and oppressive bondage; thus leaving crime to go unpunished, and immorality to pass unproved. A border warfare is evermore to be deprecated; and over such a war as has existed for so many years between these two States, humanity has had great cause to lament. Nor is such a condition of things to be deplored only because of the individual suffering attendant upon it. The effects are far more extensive. The Creator of the universe has given man the earth for his resting-place, and its fruits for his subsistence. Whatever, therefore, shall make the first, or any part of it, a scene of desolation, affects injuriously his heritage, and may be regarded as a general calamity. Wars may sometimes be necessary; but all nations have a common interest in bringing them speedily to a close. The United States have an immediate interest in seeing an end put to the state of hostilities existing between Mexico and Texas. They are neighbors of the same continent, with whom we are not only desirous of cultivating the relations of amity, but of the most extended commercial intercourse, and to practice all the rites of a neighborhood hospitality. Our

own interests are involved in the matter; since, however neutral may be our course of policy, we can not hope to escape the effects of a spirit of jealousy on the part of both of the powers. Nor can this Government be indifferent to the fact that a warfare such as is waged between those two nations is calculated to weaken both powers, and finally to render them—and especially the weaker of the two—the subjects of interference on the part of stronger and more powerful nations; which, intent only on advancing their own peculiar views, may sooner or later attempt to bring about a compliance with terms, as the condition of their interposition, alike derogatory to the nation granting them and detrimental to the interests of the United States. We could not be expected quietly to permit any such interference to our disadvantage. Considering that Texas is separated from the United States by a mere geographical line; that her territory, in the opinion of many, down to a late period, formed a portion of the territory of the United States; that it is homogeneous in its population and pursuits with the adjoining States, and makes contributions to the commerce of the world in the same articles with them; and that most of her inhabitants have been citizens of the United States, speak the same language, and live under similar political institutions with ourselves, this Government is bound by every consideration of interest, as well as of sympathy, to see that she shall be left free to act, especially in regard to her domestic affairs, unawed by force, and unrestrained by the policy or views of other countries. In full view of these considerations, the Executive has not hesitated to express to the government of Mexico how deeply it deprecated a continuance of the war, and how anxiously it desired to witness its termination. I can not but think that it becomes the United States, as the oldest of the American republics, to hold a language to Mexico upon this subject of an unambiguous character. It is time that this war had ceased. There must be a limit to all wars; and if the parent state, after an eight years' struggle, has failed to reduce to submission a portion of its subjects standing out in revolt against it, and who have not only proclaimed themselves to be independent, but have been recognized as such by other powers, she ought not to expect that other nations will quietly look, to

their obvious injury, upon a protraction of hostilities. These United States threw off their colonial dependence, and established independent governments; and Great Britain, after having wasted her energies in the attempt to subdue them for a less period than Mexico has attempted to subjugate Texas, had the wisdom and justice to acknowledge their independence; thereby recognizing the obligation which rested on her as one of the family of nations. An example thus set by one of the proudest as well as most powerful nations of the earth, it could in no way disparage Mexico to imitate. While, therefore, the Executive would deplore any collision with Mexico, or any disturbance of the friendly relations which exist between the two countries, it can not permit that government to control its policy, whatever it may be, toward Texas; but will treat her—as, by the recognition of her independence, the United States have long since declared they would do—as entirely independent of Mexico. The high obligations of public duty may enforce from the constituted authorities of the United States a policy which the course persevered in by Mexico will have mainly contributed to produce; and the Executive, in such a contingency, will, with confidence, throw itself upon the patriotism of the people to sustain the government in its course of action.

Measures of an unusual character have recently been adopted by the Mexican government, calculated in no small degree to affect the trade of other nations with Mexico, and to operate injuriously to the United States. All foreigners, by a decree of the 23d day of September, and after six months from the day of its promulgation, are forbidden to carry on the business of selling by retail any goods within the confines of Mexico. Against this decree our minister has not failed to remonstrate.

The trade heretofore carried on by our citizens with Santa Fé, in which much capital was already invested, and which was becoming of daily increased importance, has suddenly been arrested by a decree of virtual prohibition on the part of the Mexican government. Whatever may be the right of Mexico to prohibit any particular course of trade to the citizens or subjects of foreign powers, this late procedure, to say the least of it, wears a harsh and unfriendly aspect.

The installments on the claims recently settled by the convention with Mexico have been punctually paid as they have fallen due, and our minister is engaged in urging the establishment of a new commission, in pursuance of the convention for the settlement of unadjusted claims.

With the other American States our relations of amity and good-will have remained uninterrupted. Our Minister near the Republic of New Grenada has succeeded in effecting an adjustment of the claim upon that government for the schooner *By Chance*, which had been pending for many years. The claim for the brig *Morris*, which had its origin during the existence of the Republic of Colombia, and indemnification for which, since the dissolution of that Republic, has devolved upon its several members, will be urged with renewed zeal.

I have much pleasure in saying that the government of Brazil has adjusted the claim upon that government in the case of the schooner *John S. Bryan*, and that sanguine hopes are entertained that the same spirit of justice will influence its councils in arriving at an early decision upon the remaining claims; thereby removing all cause of dissension between two powers whose interests are, to some extent, interwoven with each other.

Our Minister at Chili has succeeded in inducing a recognition by that government of the adjustment, effected by his predecessor, of the first claim in the case of the *Macedonian*. The first installment has been received by the claimants in the United States.

Notice of the exchange of ratifications of the treaty with Peru, which will take place at Lima, has not yet reached this country, but is shortly expected to be received, when the claims upon that Republic will doubtless be liquidated and paid.

In consequence of a misunderstanding between this Government and that of Buenos Ayres, occurring several years ago, this Government has remained unrepresented at that court, while a minister from it has been constantly resident here. The causes of irritation have, in a great measure passed away; and it is in contemplation, in view of important interests which have grown up in that country, at some early period during the present session of Congress, with the concurrence

of the Senate, to restore diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Under the provisions of an act of Congress of the last session, a minister was dispatched from the United States to China, in August of the present year; who, from the latest accounts we have from him, was at Suez, in Egypt, on the 25th of September last, on his route to China.

In regard to the Indian tribes residing within our jurisdictional limits, the greatest vigilance of the Government has been exerted to preserve them at peace among themselves, and to inspire them with feelings of confidence in the justice of this Government, and to cultivate friendship with the border inhabitants. This has happily succeeded to a great extent; but it is a subject of regret that they suffer themselves, in some instances, to be imposed upon by artful and designing men; and this notwithstanding all efforts of the Government to prevent it.

The receipts into the Treasury for the calendar year 1843, exclusive of loans, were little more than eighteen millions of dollars; and the expenditures, exclusive of the payments on the public debt, will have been about twenty-three millions of dollars. By the act of 1842, a new arrangement of the fiscal year was made, so that it should commence on the first day of July in each year. The accounts and estimates for the current fiscal year will show that the loans and treasury-notes made and issued before the close of the last Congress, to meet the anticipated deficiency, have not been entirely adequate. Although, on the 1st of October last, there was a balance in the treasury, in consequence of the provisions thus made, of three millions nine hundred and fourteen thousand eighty-two dollars and seventy-seven cents, yet the appropriations already made by Congress will absorb that balance, and leave a probable deficiency of two millions of dollars at the close of the present fiscal year. There are outstanding treasury-notes to about the amount of four millions six hundred thousand dollars; and should they be returned upon the treasury during the fiscal year, they will require provision for their redemption. I do not, however, regard this as probable, since they have obviously entered into the currency of the country, and will continue to

form a portion of it, if the system now adopted be continued. The loan of 1841, amounting to five millions six hundred and seventy-two thousand nine hundred and seventy-six dollars and eighty-eight cents, falls due on the 1st of January, 1845, and must be provided for or postponed by a new loan. And, unless the resources of revenue should be materially increased by you there will be a probable deficiency for the service of the fiscal year ending June 30, 1845, of upwards of four millions of dollars.

The delusion incident to an enormously excessive paper circulation, which gave a fictitious value to everything, and stimulated adventure and speculation to an extravagant extent, has been happily succeeded by the substitution of the precious metals, and paper promptly redeemable in specie; and thus false values have disappeared, and a sounder condition of things has been introduced. This transition, although intimately connected with the prosperity of the country, has, nevertheless, been attended with much embarrassment to the Government in its financial concerns. So long as the foreign importers could receive payment for their cargoes in a currency of greatly less value than that in Europe, but fully available here in the purchase of our agricultural productions (their profits being immeasurably augmented by the operation), the shipments were large, and the revenues of the Government became superabundant. But the change in the character of the circulation from a nominal and apparently real value in the first stage of its existence to an obviously depreciated value in its second, so that it no longer answered the purposes of exchange or barter, and its ultimate substitution by a sound metallic and paper circulation combined, has been attended by diminished importations, and a consequent falling off in the revenue. This has induced Congress, from 1837, to resort to the expedient of issuing treasury-notes, and, finally, of funding them, in order to supply deficiencies. I can not, however, withhold the remark that it is in no way compatible with the dignity of the Government that a public debt should be created in time of peace to meet the current expenses of the Government, or that temporary expedients should be resorted to an hour longer than it is possible to avoid them. The Executive can do no more than

apply the means which Congress places in its hands for the support of Government; and happily for the good of the country and for the preservation of its liberties, it possesses no power to levy exactions on the people, or to force from them contributions to the public revenue in any form. It can only recommend such measures as may, in its opinion, be called for by the wants of the public service to Congress, with whom alone rests the power to "lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises." This duty has, upon several occasions, heretofore been performed. The present condition of things gives flattering promise that trade and commerce are rapidly reviving; and, fortunately for the country, the sources of revenue have only to be opened in order to prove abundant.

While we can anticipate no considerable increase in the proceeds of the sales of the public lands, for reasons perfectly obvious to all, for several years to come, yet the public lands can not otherwise than be regarded as the foundation of the public credit. With so large a body of the most fertile lands in the world under the control and at the disposal of this Government, no one can reasonably doubt its entire ability to meet its engagements under every emergency. In seasons of trial and difficulty, similar to those through which we are passing, the capitalist makes his investments in the Government stocks, with the most assured confidence of ultimate reimbursement; and whatever may be said of a period of great financial prosperity, such as existed for some years after 1833, I should regard it as suicidal, in a season of financial embarrassment, to alienate either the lands themselves, or the proceeds arising from their sales. The first and paramount duty of those to whom may be intrusted the administration of public affairs, is to guard the public credit. In re-establishing the credit of this central Government, the readiest and most obvious mode is taken to restore the credit of the States. The extremities can only be made sound by producing a healthy action in the central Government; and the history of the present day fully establishes the fact, that an increase in the value of the stocks of this Government will, in a great majority of instances, be attended by an increase in the value of the stocks of the States. It should, therefore, be a matter of general congratulation that, amid all

the embarrassments arising from surrounding circumstances, the credit of the Government should have been so fully restored that it has been enabled to effect a loan of seven millions of dollars to redeem that amount of treasury-notes, on terms more favorable than any that have been offered for many years. And the six per cent stock which was created in 1842 has advanced, in the hands of the holders, to nearly twenty per cent above its par value. The confidence of the people in the integrity of their Government has thus been signally manifested. These opinions relative to the public lands do not, in any manner, conflict with the observance of the most liberal policy toward those of our fellow-citizens who press forward into the wilderness, and are the pioneers in the work of its reclamation. In securing to such their rights of pre-emption, the Government performs but an act of retributive justice for sufferings encountered and hardships endured, and finds ample remuneration in the comforts which its policy insures and the happiness which it imparts.

Should a revision of the tariff, with a view to revenue, become necessary in the estimation of Congress, I doubt not you will approach the subject with a just and enlightened regard to the interests of the whole Union. The principles and views which I have heretofore had occasion to submit, remain unchanged. It can, however, never be too often repeated, that the prominent interest of every important pursuit of life requires, for success, permanency and stability in legislation. These can only be attained by adopting, as the basis of action, moderation in all things; which is as indispensably necessary to secure the harmonious action of the political as of the animal system. In our political organization no one section of the country should desire to have its supposed interests advanced at the sacrifice of all others; but union being the great interest, equally precious to all, should be fostered and sustained by mutual concessions and the cultivation of that spirit of compromise from which the Constitution itself proceeded.

You will be informed by the report from the Treasury Department, of the measures taken under the act of the last session authorizing the reissue of treasury-notes in lieu of those then outstanding. The system adopted, in pursuance of existing

laws seems well calculated to save the country a large amount of interest, while it affords conveniences, and obviates dangers and expense in the transmission of funds to disbursing agents. I refer you, also, to that report for the means proposed by the Secretary to increase the revenue, and particularly to that portion of it which relates to the subject of the warehousing system, which I earnestly urged upon Congress at its last session, and as to the importance of which my opinion has undergone no change.

In view of the disordered condition of the currency at the time, and the high rates of exchange between different parts of the country, I felt it to be incumbent on me to present to the consideration of your predecessors a proposition, conflicting in no degree with the Constitution or with the rights of the States, and having the sanction (not in detail, but in principle) of some of the eminent men who have preceded me in the Executive office. That proposition contemplated the issuing of treasury-notes of denominations of not less than five nor more than one hundred dollars, to be employed in the payment of the obligations of the Government in lieu of gold and silver, at the option of the public creditor, and to an amount not exceeding fifteen millions of dollars. It was proposed to make them receivable everywhere, and to establish at various points depositories of gold and silver, to be held in trust for the redemption of such notes, so as to insure their convertibility into specie. No doubt was entertained that such notes would have maintained a par value with gold and silver, thus furnishing a paper currency of equal value over the Union, thereby meeting the just expectations of the people, and fulfilling the duties of a parental Government. Whether the depositories should be permitted to sell or purchase bills under very limited restrictions, together with all its other details, was submitted to the wisdom of Congress, and was regarded as of secondary importance. I thought then, and think now, that such an arrangement would have been attended with the happiest results. The whole matter of the currency would have been placed where, by the Constitution, it was designed to be placed, under the immediate supervision and control of Congress. The action of the Government would have been independent of all

corporations, and the same eye which rests unceasingly on the specie currency, and guards it against adulteration, would also have rested on the paper currency, to control and regulate its issues and protect it against depreciation. The same reasons which would forbid Congress from parting with the power over the coinage, would seem to operate with nearly equal force in regard to any substitution for the precious metals in the form of a circulating medium. Paper, when substituted for specie, constitutes a standard of value by which the operations of society are regulated; and whatsoever causes its depreciation affects society to an extent nearly, if not quite, equal to the adulteration of the coin. Nor can I withhold the remark, that its advantages, contrasted with the Bank of the United States—apart from the fact that a bank was esteemed obnoxious to the public sentiment, as well on the score of expediency as of Constitutionality—appeared to me to be striking and obvious. The relief which a bank would afford by an issue of fifteen millions of dollars of its notes, judging from the experience of the late United States Bank, would not have occurred in less than fifteen years; whereas, under the proposed arrangement, the relief arising from the issue of fifteen millions of dollars of treasury-notes would have been consummated in one year; thus furnishing, in one-fifteenth part of the time in which a bank could have accomplished it, a paper medium of exchange equal in amount to the real wants of the country, at par value with gold and silver. The saving to the Government would have been equal to all the interest which it has had to pay on treasury-notes of previous as well as subsequent issues; thereby relieving the Government, and, at the same time, affording relief to the people. Under all the responsibilities attached to the station which I occupy, and in redemption of a pledge given to the last Congress at the close of its first session, I submitted the suggestion to its consideration at two consecutive sessions. The recommendation, however, met with no favor at its hands. While I am free to admit that the necessities of the times have since become greatly ameliorated, and that there is good reason to hope that the country is safely and rapidly emerging from the difficulties and embarrassments which everywhere surrounded it in 1841, yet I

can not but think that its restoration to a sound and healthy condition would be greatly expedited by a resort to the expedient in a modified form.

The operations of the Treasury now rest upon the Act of 1789 and the resolution of 1816; and those laws have been so administered as to produce as great a quantum of good to the country as their provisions are capable of yielding. If there had been any distinct expression of opinion going to show that public sentiment is averse to the plan, either as heretofore recommended to Congress, or in a modified form, while my own opinion in regard to it would remain unchanged, I should be very far from again presenting it to your consideration. The Government originated with the States and the people, for their own benefit and advantage; and it would be subversive of the foundation principles of the political edifice which they have reared to persevere in a measure which, in their mature judgments, they had either repudiated or condemned. The will of our constituents clearly expressed, should be regarded as the light to guide our footsteps; the true difference between a monarchical or aristocratical government and a republic being, that in the first the will of the few prevails over the will of the many; while, in the last, the will of the many should be alone consulted.

The report of the Secretary of War will bring you acquainted with the condition of that important branch of the public service. The army may be regarded, in consequence of the small number of the rank and file in each company and regiment, as little more than a nucleus, around which to rally the military force of the country in case of war, and yet its services in preserving the peace of the frontiers are of a most important nature. In all cases of emergency the reliance of the country is properly placed in the militia of the several States; and it may well deserve the consideration of Congress, whether a new and more perfect organization might not be introduced, looking mainly to the volunteer companies of the Union for the present, and of easy application to the great body of the militia in time of war.

The expenditures of the War Department have been considerably reduced in the last two years. Contingencies, how-

ever, may arise which would call for the filling up of the regiments with a full complement of men, and make it very desirable to remount the corps of dragoons, which, by an act of the last Congress, was directed to be dissolved.

I refer you to the accompanying report of the Secretary for information in relation to the navy of the United States. While every effort has been, and will continue to be, made to retrench all superfluities, and lop off all excrescences which from time to time may have grown up, yet it has not been regarded as wise or prudent to recommend any material change in the annual appropriations. The interests which are involved are of too important a character to lead to the recommendation of any other than a liberal policy. Adequate appropriations ought to be made, to enable the Executive to fit out all the ships that are now in a course of building, or that require repairs, for active service in the shortest possible time, should any emergency arise which may require it. An efficient navy, while it is the cheapest means of public defense, enlists in its support the feelings of pride and confidence which brilliant deeds and heroic valor have heretofore served to strengthen and confirm.

I refer you particularly to that part of the Secretary's report which has reference to recent experiments in the application of steam, and in the construction of our war-steamers, made under the superintendence of distinguished officers of the navy. In addition to other manifest improvements in the construction of the steam-engine and application of the motive power, which has rendered them more appropriate to the uses of ships-of-war, one of those officers has brought into use a power which makes the steamship most formidable either for attack or defense. I can not too strongly recommend this subject to your consideration, and do not hesitate to express my entire conviction of its great importance.

I call your particular attention, also, to that portion of the Secretary's report which has reference to the act of the late session of Congress, which prohibited the transfer of any balance of appropriation from other heads of appropriation to that for building, equipment, and repair. The repeal of that prohibition will enable the Department to give renewed employment

to a large class of workmen who have been necessarily discharged in consequence of the want of means to pay them—a circumstance attended, especially at this season of the year, with much privation and suffering.

It gives me great pain to announce to you the loss of the steamship *The Missouri*, by fire, in the bay of Gibraltar, where she had stopped to renew her supplies of coal, on her voyage to Alexandria, with Mr. Cushing, the American Minister to China, on board. There is ground for high commendation of the officers and men for the coolness and intrepidity and perfect submission to discipline evinced under the most trying circumstances. Surrounded by a raging fire, which the utmost exertions could not subdue, and which threatened momentarily the explosion of her well-supplied magazines, the officers exhibited no signs of fear, and the men obeyed every order with alacrity. Nor was she abandoned until the last gleam of hope of saving her had expired. It is well worthy of your consideration whether the losses sustained by the officers and crew in this unfortunate affair should not be reimbursed to them.

I can not take leave of this painful subject without advertising to the aid rendered upon the occasion by the British authorities at Gibraltar, and the commander, officers, and crew of the British ship-of-the-line, *The Malabar*, which was lying at the time in the bay. Everything that generosity or humanity could dictate was promptly performed. It is by such acts of good-will by one to another of the family of nations that fraternal feelings are nourished, and the blessings of permanent peace secured.

The report of the Postmaster-General will bring you acquainted with the operations of that Department during the past year, and will suggest to you such modifications of the existing laws as, in your opinion, the exigencies of the public service may require. The change which the country has undergone of late years in the mode of travel and transportation has afforded so many facilities for the transmission of mail-matter out of the regular mail as to require the greatest vigilance and circumspection in order to enable the officer at the head of the Department to restrain the expenditures within the income. There is also too much reason to fear that the franking

privilege has run into great abuse. The Department, nevertheless, has been conducted with great vigor, and has attained, at the least possible expense, all the useful objects for which it was established.

In regard to all the departments, I am quite happy in the belief that nothing has been left undone which was called for by a true spirit of economy, or by a system of accountability rigidly enforced. This is, in some degree, apparent from the fact that the Government has sustained no loss by the default of any of its agents. In the complex, but at the same time beautiful, machinery of our system of Government it is not a matter of surprise that some remote agency may have failed for an instant to fulfill its desired office; but I feel confident in the assertion that nothing has occurred to interrupt the harmonious action of the Government itself; and that, while the laws have been executed with efficiency and vigor, the rights neither of States nor of individuals have been trampled on or disregarded.

In the meantime the country has been steadily advancing in all that contributes to national greatness. The tide of population continues unbrokenly to flow into the new States and Territories, where a refuge is found, not only for our native-born fellow-citizens, but for emigrants from all parts of the civilized world, who come among us to partake of the blessings of our free institutions, and to aid by their labor to swell the current of our wealth and power.

It is due to every consideration of public policy that the lakes and rivers of the West should receive all such attention at the hands of Congress as the Constitution will enable it to bestow. Works in favorable and proper situations on the lakes would be found to be as indispensably necessary in case of war, to carry on safe and successful naval operations, as fortifications on the Atlantic sea-board. The appropriation made by the last Congress for the improvement of the navigation of the Mississippi River has been diligently and efficiently applied.

I can not close this communication, gentlemen, without recommending to your most favorable consideration the interests of this district. Appointed by the Constitution its exclusive legislators, and forming, in this particular, the

only anomaly in our system of Government—that of the legislative body being elected by others than those for whose advantage they are to legislate—you will feel a superadded obligation to look well into their condition, and to leave no cause for complaint or regret. The seat of Government of our associated republics can not but be regarded as worthy of your parental care.

In connection with its other interests, as well as those of the whole country, I recommend that, at your present session, you adopt such measures in order to carry into effect the Smithsonian bequest as in your judgment will be best calculated to consummate the liberal intent of the testator.

When, under a dispensation of Divine Providence, I succeeded to the Presidential office the state of public affairs was embarrassing and critical. To add to the irritation consequent upon a long-standing controversy with one of the most powerful nations of modern times, involving not only questions of boundary (which, under the most favorable circumstances, are always embarrassing), but, at the same time, important and high principles of maritime law, border controversies between the citizens and subjects of the two countries had engendered a state of feeling and of conduct which threatened the most calamitous consequences. The hazards incident to this state of things were greatly heightened by the arrest and imprisonment of a subject of Great Britain, who, acting (as it was alleged) as a part of a military force, had aided in the commission of an act violative of the territorial jurisdiction of the United States, and involving the murder of a citizen of the State of New York. A large amount of claims against the government of Mexico remained unadjusted; and a war of several years' continuance with the savage tribes of Florida still prevailed, attended with the desolation of a large portion of that beautiful territory, and with the sacrifice of many valuable lives. To increase the embarrassment of the Government, individual and State credit had been nearly stricken down, and confidence in the General Government was so much impaired that loans of a small amount could only be negotiated at a considerable sacrifice. As a necessary consequence of the blight which had fallen on commerce and mechanical industry, the ships of the

one were thrown out of employment, and the operations of the other had been greatly diminished. Owing to the condition of the currency, exchanges between different parts of the country had become ruinously high, and trade had to depend on a depreciated paper currency in conducting its transactions. I shall be permitted to congratulate the country that, under an overruling Providence, peace was preserved without a sacrifice of the national honor; the war in Florida was brought to a speedy termination; a large portion of the claims on Mexico have been fully adjudicated, and are in course of payment, while justice has been rendered to us in other matters by other nations; confidence between man and man is in a great measure restored, and the credit of this Government fully and perfectly re-established. Commerce is becoming more and more extended in its operations, and manufacturing and mechanical industry once more reaps the rewards of skill and labor honestly applied. The operations of trade rest on a sound currency, and the rates of exchange are reduced to their lowest amount. In this condition of things I have felt it to be my duty to bring to your favorable consideration matters of great interest in their present and ultimate results; and the only desire which I feel in connection with the future is, and will continue to be, to leave the country prosperous, and its institutions unimpaired.

The main points in this message are the rehearsal of the principles of the exchequer, the prospective difficulties with England as to the north-western boundary, and the warlike tone in relation to Mexican and Texan affairs. In 1807, 1818, 1824, and 1826 the forty-ninth degree of latitude was either claimed, or would have been admitted, as the northern limit of the United States on the Pacific. There had, however, been a disposition in this country to claim more of the coast, and this disposition increased as the original explorations and early adventures on the Pacific became better known. This

fact was recognized, and to some extent the claim of this country affirmed, when, in 1825, the treaty with Russia placed the southern boundary of that nation at $54^{\circ} 40'$ on the coast. The boundary of 47° east of the Rocky Mountains did not affect the line between England and the United States at the West, although its extension might have been suggested as suitable. At all events, and however far Mr. Tyler overstated the exact facts in the case, his announcement in this message of the line of $54^{\circ} 40'$ became a matter of great political importance, and aided materially in giving his Democratic successor the small majority by which the Whigs claimed he fraudulently took the Presidential Chair.

The President's message, in that part relating to Texas and Mexico, had an unseen signification, or the President meant more by it than he seemed to do. The annexation of Texas to the United States had long been desired by some Southern politicians, and as early as 1842 a few of Mr. Tyler's most intimate and private counselors began to intrigue to that end. In the winter of 1842 the artful plan was laid to make the Texas annexation the leading feature of the next Presidential campaign. A few friends of the extension of slavery had charge of this intrigue, of which a necessary preliminary step was to secure the nomination of a man favorable to their purposes for the Presidency. It was determined that that man should not be Martin Van Buren; and however much General Jackson desired the re-election of Mr. Van Buren, he was to

be used, by a piece of sharp trickery, to defeat Mr. Van Buren's nomination. The annexation of Texas and 54° 40' were destined to become the Democratic rallying cries of 1844.

By reason partly of the want of harmony between the two branches of Congress few acts of importance were passed during this session. In 1842 Congress had appropriated thirty thousand dollars to Mr. Morse to test his invention of the magnetic telegraph; and in the spring of 1844 he put up his line between Washington and Baltimore, and sent instantly the first communications ever made in the world in this way.

Fremont had just finished his second wonderful expedition beyond the Rocky Mountains. The gag rule, designed to prevent the introduction of abolition and other petitions relating to slavery, was so far avoided during this session as to admit some of this combustible matter. John Quincy Adams could now never lose an opportunity to stir up this vexed question. Through him was presented a petition from the State of New York asking Congress to separate the people of that State from all connection with slavery.

Two men, at least, entered Congress at this session who became distinguished in the history of the country, Stephen A. Douglas and Andrew Johnson. On the 22d of April, 1844, President Tyler laid before Congress a treaty with Texas, providing for the admission of that country as a State of the Union. This the Senate rejected by a majority of

more than two to one. A few days after this event, on the 17th of June, Congress adjourned; and although for a time the annexation scheme was deferred, it was not by any means quieted. There was a growing sentiment in its favor, and throughout the country the intrigues of the Cabinet and the politicians were prosecuted with uncommon vigor.

CHAPTER XIV.

TEXAS AND PRESIDENT TYLER—THE GREAT SCHEME OF
THE ADMINISTRATION—THE RALLYING CRY
OF 1844—HOW MR. CALHOUN GOT
INTO THE CABINET.

TEXAS had now become the absorbing theme of the Administration, and from this fact and the prominence it assumed in the election of his successor, a more extended view of the whole case is necessary at this point. President Tyler had started out, as all his predecessors had done, full of good intentions. No new Administration has ever been inaugurated which was not especially called upon to be considered the patron of some reform, the corrector of some system of corruption or mismanagement. "A permanent and radical change" was needed in some things connected with public affairs when Mr. Tyler came into office. Among these was the evil attending the removal from office of faithful and competent men merely for party consideration, a practice in vogue for the last twelve years. General Harrison had set out with great zeal in this species of reform; but the party wolves, a hungry army, were on his heels, and before the end of his short career, cut short in part by that army,

there were plain signs that he was giving way before the unexpected pressure. Mr. Tyler followed in his tracks, which was a fair indication of his disposition to adhere to the supposed policy of the party with which he was identified. For a time Mr. Tyler was successful, to some extent, and especially in reference to clerks of Departments. When many of the Van Buren Democratic clerks were receiving the usual bit of party advice, "Your services are no longer required in this Department," Mr. Tyler stepped forward saying: "That's all very well, but you must restore these men. If you don't, I shall have their wives and children coming to me with sad stories of their starvation, and I am determined not to take part in making people wretched." When Mr. Tyler came into the Presidency a stream of office-hunters from Virginia set in towards the White House. It finally proved to be irresistible. A writer in the "Atlantic Monthly" tells of one of these Virginia applicants whom Mr. Tyler charged to his face of being a drunkard, but whom out of the goodness of his heart, he appointed keeper of the penitentiary. When this worthy character took charge of the institution he called the inmates together, it is said, and made them the following conciliatory speech: "Boys, I'm your boss. If you'll behave yourselves like gentlemen, I'll treat you as such, but if you don't I'll turn every mother's son of you out!" Henry A. Wise says that one of Mr. Tyler's great difficulties was that he was so tender-hearted that he could not say no. However much he may

have fallen under this organic defect in dealing with his friends and admirers who wanted office and honors within his gift, he became notable among Presidents for actually saying *No* to Congress. As in almost all other cases, from the introduction of the spoils system under Andrew Jackson to the present time, Mr. Tyler substantially failed in correcting materially any abuse of partisan Executive patronage. So great, indeed, became his desire to serve the few Congressmen who had adhered to him, and others who stood out on his side or advocated his candidacy in 1844, that when he could not succeed with the Senate, he resorted to extreme, if not unlawful means, as in the case of Caleb Cushing, in carrying out his purposes without the consent of the Senate, or in taking the step during the vacation of Congress when the Senate was powerless, and where he very well knew his course never would be sanctioned by that body. It may be argued that it was a factious Senate. But it was a factious President too, and however scandalous the contest between the President and the Senate, it is doubtful whether in that fact an apology for the President's course should be found. Mr. Tyler's conduct excited partisan admiration. The single-handed contest of a man deserted by his former friends always does excite sympathy, when he doggedly adheres to his purposes. Beyond all doubt, when all has been said, the entire Presidential service of Mr. Tyler proves his great moral courage.

Von Holst, whose *Constitutional History of Political Intrigue and Gossip* is little more than

a flippant scandal on American public men and public affairs, says of Mr. Tyler's final departure from his original promises as to official patronage :—

“His little soul thought his people so small that he believed he had, in the bestowal of offices, the sure key to the White House, and the nearer his term of office approached its end, the more regardless did he dispose of them as if they were his private property. The Democrats, among whom chiefly he went about peddling his stock in trade, did not undervalue the advantage which a policy of this kind, as unwise as it was shameless, brought to them.”

I have before spoken of this very pretentious foreign writer's charge of moral cowardice against Mr. Tyler. The want of what is called moral courage can hardly be charged justly, perhaps, against any Virginian, and in vain have I looked for it in the conduct of Mr. Tyler, even in all his squirmings and twistings for a time to avoid a rupture with the Whigs, which he hoped from the outset would not be forced upon him, and which he earnestly believed would not be among the requirements of the public good. About all of ill report or good report which can or should be said of John Tyler, I have said, as I have attempted to do of all other Presidents of the United States, in the course of this work, and doubt whether any fair-minded American reader will find himself able or disposed to-day to give such an intemperate and groundless character to President Tyler as is found in the slangy and gossipy pages of “The Constitutional and Political History of the

United States, by Dr. H. Von Holst, Professor in the University of Freiburg." Mr. Tyler was not perhaps a great man. Strictly speaking, there have been few of these in any country, or any age; but littleness of soul he had not. No American President has ever approached that quality. Even the ribald partisan stump-speaker that would make such a charge in this country, would indignantly resist the charge in his calm, sane moments. It would barely be safe at close quarters even to-day to call any Virginian little in soul. But it may be said, finally, that Mr. Tyler is no exception with the Freiburg Herr, who finds few models in what seems to be to him the American political cesspool in which he has been dabbling.

Mr. Tyler's ambition to succeed himself in the Presidency never could have been very intense, as Henry A. Wise says "his only failure was to aspire to office and to succeed to a succession." He certainly lacked the skill of an experienced political tactician. His appointments were not successes in advancing his interests, if he meant that they should be. Most of his chosen friends were not trusted leaders of the people. They were exactly the opposite. And even these tricky but indiscreet wire-workers he hurried off when he could to foreign parts. Then he offered a position on the Supreme Bench to John Sergeant and Horace Binney. They both declined to accept because of advanced age. They were not his political friends and never could be again. But he thought they were able and just

men, and would be an honor to the highest court of the country. This was exceptionally meritorious conduct. He knew that he had nothing to expect from the Whigs. Even in the selection of the members of his Cabinet he often acted without the least apparent reference to political influence in the sections; going so far during a part of his term as to have two Cabinet ministers from the same State. Mr. Upshur and Mr. Gilmer, the secret, the open, and always able and determined advocates of Mr. Tyler's most cherished scheme, the annexation of Texas, were gone. And in the summer of 1844, Henry A. Wise, the rashest and least harmless of Mr. Tyler's adherents, left the country as Minister to Brazil. Neither Mr. Webster nor Mr. Spencer were in accord with the Texas business. Still the latter quit the Cabinet on such good terms that the President would have placed him on the Supreme Bench for life, if the Senate had been of the same mind.

Ben Perley Poore gives the following description of Henry A. Wise:—

“Henry A. Wise had been Mr. Clay's instrument in securing the nomination of Mr. Tyler as Vice-President, and was the most influential adviser at the White House. He was then in the prime of his early manhood, tall, spare, and upright, with large, lusterless, gray-blue eyes, high cheek-bones, a large mouth, a complexion saffron-hued from his inordinate use of tobacco, and coarse, long hair, brushed back from his low forehead. He was brilliant in conversation, and when he addressed an audience he was the incarnation of effective eloquence. No one has ever poured forth in the Capitol of the United States such

torrents of words, such erratic flights of fancy, such blasting insinuations, such solemn prayers, such blasphemous imprecations. Like Jeremiah of old, he felt the dark shadow of coming events; and he regarded the Yankees as the inevitable foes of the old Commonwealth of Virginia."

This strange, egotistic man's eloquence certainly ended with his tongue, for when he took up the pen it was wholly wanting. There is before me a letter from a friend of Mr. Wise apologizing for the "Seven Decades of the Union" and the remarkable impertinence with which he took hold of the affairs of Mr. Tyler's Administration, as if he was the rightful possessor of the whole concern. The same letter also assures me that Mr. Tyler was often amused, if not chagrined, over his friend's extravagance, officiousness, and forwardness in his behalf. Yet he was not without benefits to Mr. Tyler; or rather without Henry A. Wise some things in his Administration would have been different, if not better.

After the death of the two Virginia Cabinet ministers, the burden of the Texas scheme fell upon Mr. Wise, or at least, he assumed the responsibility for it, of his own accord in his own mind. He says that when Legaré had been canonized, and Upshur and Gilmer were gone, he asked himself the stupendous question as to whom the Texas scheme for the South should be trusted, and answered himself, to Calhoun. The next thought was that President Tyler for some inexplicable reason did not want Mr. Calhoun in his council. But the way out of this difficulty he was not long in devising. He immedi-

ately found George McDuffie, of South Carolina, and requested him to write to Mr. Calhoun at once, notifying him that his name would probably be sent to the Senate as Secretary of State, and to urge him to accept. He neglected to tell Mr. McDuffie that he was not acting by direction of the President, and so the letter was dispatched to Mr. Calhoun. Mr. Wise's next step was to notify the President of what he had done. He found the President at the White House before breakfast, and in a "flood of tears" on account of the *Princeton* disaster. He says himself that he at once began to lecture the President in this manner:—

"By saying that it was no time for mourning or wasting himself in grief, that the moment called for prompt action and attention to duty, and that his work was pressing and heavy. It was an auspicious time, at least, to nominate for the vacancies in his Cabinet, when the dignity and solemnity of public grief for so great a calamity would shame and hush all factious opposition, and human sympathy alone at such a moment would confirm the nominations he would then make to the Senate. There were too many important affairs to be disposed of in this last year of his term of office to admit of delay. He must subdue his grief and find relief, the best relief, in turning to his tasks. He asked at once, 'What is to be done?' The answer was ready: 'Your most important work is the annexation of Texas, and the man for that work is Mr. Calhoun. Send for him at once.' His air changed at once, and he quickly and firmly said: 'No; Texas is important, but Mr. Calhoun is not the man of my choice.'"

Determined to make a tragic affair of his egregious impertinence, as a last resort on the President,

Mr. Wise resumed after breakfast, where Mr. Calhoun's name had not been mentioned:—

“‘Sir, in saying good morning to you now, I may be taking a last farewell. I have unselfishly tried to be your friend, and to aid your administration of public affairs, and have, doubtless, your kind feelings and confidence; but I fear I have done that which will forfeit your confidence, and cause us to be friends no longer. You say you will not nominate Mr. Calhoun as your Secretary of State. If so, then I have done both you and him a great wrong, and must go immediately to Mr. McDuffie to apologize for causing him to commit himself, and you, too, by an unauthorized act of mine.’

“‘What do you mean?’ exclaimed the President, evidently disturbed.

“‘I mean that this morning, before coming here, uninvited, to breakfast, I went to Mr. McDuffie and prevailed on him to write to Mr. Calhoun and ask him to accept the place of Secretary of State at your hands.’

“‘Did you say you went at my instance to make that request?’

“‘No, I did not in words, but my act, as your known friend, implied as much, and Mr. McDuffie was too much of a gentleman to ask me whether I had authority express from you. I went to him without your authority, for the very reason that I knew I could not obtain it; and I did not tell Mr. McDuffie that I had not your authority, for I knew he would not, in that case, have written to Mr. Calhoun, as I had requested. And now, if you do not sanction what I have done, you will place me where you would be loath to place a foe, much less a friend. I can hardly be your friend any longer unless you sanction my unauthorized act for your own sake, not my own.’

“He looked at us in utter surprise for some minutes, and then, lifting both hands, said:—

“Well, you are the most extraordinary man I ever saw ; the most willful and wayward, the most incorrigible ; and, therefore, there is no help for it. No one else would have done it in this way but you, and you are the only man who could have done it with me. Take the office and tender it to Mr. Calhoun ; I, doubtless, am wrong in refusing the services of such a man. You may write to him yourself, at once.”

This Wise refused to do, but demanded that the name should at once be sent to the Senate in order to clinch Mr. Calhoun before he could say no or receive McDuffie's letter.

This is, no doubt, the secret history of the presence of Mr. Calhoun in the Cabinet of President Tyler, who did not want him there. The whole affair reveals the danger of such friendships, and certainly argues that the President of the United States, at least, should not have them. As President, Washington held that he should know no personal friends. Other wise and careful men have entertained the same just view, and largely carried it into practice.

When it had, at last, been decided that the time for the annexation of Texas had come, that the progress of the free States would soon destroy the equilibrium between the sections, or that the power of the South in the Government would be lost, unless slave territory, something more reliable than Northern Democracy, could be secured to strengthen a cause which the very advance of time had a tendency to contract on all sides, hands were ready to undertake the work. In the winter of 1842, Mr. Gilmer's letter to a Baltimore newspaper suddenly brought

the project to the direct attention and interest of the country. This step was wisely planned for the purpose; and, although Mr. Calhoun's hand was not seen, it was held by many that he was at the bottom of the movement. However this may be, the views entertained in the letter were not wholly new with Mr. Gilmer, as he had announced some of them years before. The letter urged the immediate annexation of Texas; and the principal, the ostensible reason advanced for this step was to thwart the secret designs of Great Britain, not only to establish her authority at the Southwest, but also to put herself in better position to push her plans for the general abolition of slavery. While the whole groundwork of this letter was a mere fabrication so far as its authors either knew or cared, yet it was not, perhaps, without truth. So far as the British government was concerned, it had no designs upon Texas, nor upon slavery in the United States, more than its general interest in the extinction of an institution which of later years had become repugnant to British civilization. The American Minister in London, Edward Everett, was required to lay the matter before the Ministry. This was a necessary pretense to give strength to the foundation for the movement. Lord Aberdeen, the British Premier, stated to Mr. Everett that "the slaveholding States may be assured that although we shall not desist from those open and honest efforts which we have constantly made for procuring the abolition of slavery throughout the world, we shall

neither openly nor secretly resort to any measures which can tend to disturb their internal tranquillity, or thereby to affect the prosperity of the American Union." In the veracity of this reiterated statement of England Mr. Calhoun either did not believe, or pretended not to believe. But while it was true that the English government had no intention of disturbing the affairs of the United States, British Abolitionists had not the same inducements to attend to their own business. Mexico had declared against slavery in all her territory, and it was not reasonable to suppose that the Abolitionists of England could stand quietly and see a vast area added to slavery without at least their moral dissent. But there is no good evidence to show that they made any serious steps to do anything else. The Gilmer letter had two principal objects in view. One was the manufacture of sentiment in favor of annexation, and the chief reliance for this was the known jealousy of the country at that time of the movements of England. The other was the nomination of a Presidential candidate who would favor the annexation, and the chief means to this end was to break down the prospects of Mr. Van Buren, in whom Southern pro-slavery politicians, to a great extent, wanted confidence, and who was known to be opposed to the annexation of Texas on any other than the very unwarlike but just principle of consulting the pleasure of Mexico. And the chief means to the defeat of Mr. Van Buren was to get committed to unconditional and immediate

annexation General Jackson, under whose patronage Mr. Van Buren was expected to receive the nomination. Aaron Vail Brown, of Tennessee, was made the medium of communicating the Baltimore letter to General Jackson, and drawing the old man into the snare. As was expected he believed the story, fired immediately at Great Britain, and had written for him the very letter the intriguers desired, committing him irretrievably to the annexation scheme. It was originally designed to spring his letter on the convention, and there cause it to defeat Mr. Van Buren; but circumstances led to its earlier publication, which threw its weight on the side of the annexation agitators, and did not lessen its influence materially against the success of Mr. Van Buren. The citizen of Maryland, to whom Gilmer's letter was addressed, was Duff Green, of Washington City; and another letter, which figured somewhat in the case, written, it was pretended, in London, was believed by some to be from the pen of this unbending supporter of Mr. Calhoun. In preceding volumes of this work may be found fragments of the history of this letter. Although the Texas annexation scheme had long been brewing, this letter gave it a fresh impetus, and it was now not allowed to rest until it became the most exciting theme before the country. It became the pet, the all-absorbing, project of Mr. Tyler, of his family, of his Administration, and of his political friends; and Texas and Oregon, Texas and 54° 40', became the rallying cry of the Democracy in 1844. The

successful manipulation of this whole matter under the tenth Administration laid the foundation for the defeat of Mr. Clay in 1844, and prepared the country for a war of acquisition.

Early in the fall of 1843, President Tyler began more definitely to open the way for negotiation. On the 23d of August, of that year, the Mexican government, seeing the designs of the United States, notified our representative to that country that the annexation would be taken as a declaration of war on our part. But about the middle of October, Mr. Upshur, the Secretary of State, proposed a treaty of annexation to the Texas agent or representative residing in Washington. Texas was at this time negotiating with Mexico, and in January, 1844, Mr. Van Zandt, the Texas agent at Washington, notified Mr. Upshur that there could be no doubt of Mexico again resuming hostilities against Texas in case annexation to the United States were declared. Under this conviction Van Zandt asked if the Administration was ready to protect and defend Texas in that event. Mr. Upshur was not ready with a reply. But the same query was put to Mr. Murphy, our Chargé in Texas, and he answered:—

“I have no hesitation in declaring, on the part of my Government, that neither Mexico nor any other power will be permitted to invade Texas on account of any negotiation which may take place in relation to any subject upon which Texas is or may be invited by the United States to negotiate; that the United States, having invited that negotiation, will be a guaranty of their honor that no evil shall result to Texas from accepting the invitation,

and that active measures will be taken immediately by the United States to prevent the evils you seem to anticipate from this source."

On the strength of this declaration the Texas authorities sent J. P. Henderson to Washington with power to conclude a treaty. Murphy also ordered the United States schooner *Flirt*, to proceed to Vera Cruz, and keep watch over the movements of Mexico, to be ready for any invasion of Texas. About the time Henderson was dispatched to Washington, the Commissioners of Texas and Mexico completed an armistice which looked to an amicable settlement of their affairs. Texas did not, however, ratify the convention with Mexico. Mr. Calhoun took up the subject where Mr. Upshur had stopped. The very energetic Mr. Murphy had urged haste in sending troops to the border. Henderson and Van Zandt now advised that some steps be taken in this direction as a preliminary to further negotiations. The following extract is from a letter which was at last drawn from Mr. Calhoun on the 11th of April, 1844, to the Texas Commissioners:—

"I am directed by the President to say that the Secretary of the Navy has been instructed to order a strong naval force to concentrate in the Gulf of Mexico to meet any emergency; and that similar orders have been issued by the Secretary of War to move our disposable forces on our south-western frontier for the same purpose. Should the exigency arise to which you refer in your note to Mr. Upshur, I am further directed by the President to say that, during the pendency of the treaty of annexation, he would deem it his duty to use all the means placed within

his power by the Constitution to protect Texas from all foreign invasion."

On the 12th of April Mr. Calhoun concluded the treaty, but notwithstanding the hurry in this work the treaty was not sent to the Senate until the 22d of April; and although the greatest secrecy was used in the matter before the Senate, on the 27th the New York "Evening Post" announced that the annexation scheme was then under discussion in the Senate in the form of a treaty signed by the President.

CHAPTER XV.

TYLER AND TEXAS—THE GREAT THEME OF THE ADMINISTRATION—TEXAS OR SECESSION—PRESIDENTIAL CONVENTIONS.

THE main points presented by the President to justify his course are, that the United States was simply reclaiming her own, as included in the purchase from France in 1803; and the exhausted condition of Texas, which now made her a prey to foreign powers, which he believed to be then designing her acquisition to the prejudice of the United States. This latter point the President, no doubt, believed to be true and of great importance, although it had been claimed that Mexico, in any event, was not likely ever to be able to subdue Texas, a point about which there might be some doubt. It is certain, however, that Texas entertained great anxiety on this subject, and was not willing to close the treaty until assured of the protection which the act would make her liable to need. If Texas was included in the Louisiana purchase of 1803, it is certain that, in good faith, by a treaty which even General Jackson sanctioned, the claim of this country to Texas was lost in 1819. President Tyler here reasserts "The Monroe Doctrine," that the United States was already sufficiently cramped by European powers on this

continent, and that he did not share in the fears of some as to the danger and impolicy of extending the territory and jurisdiction of this Government.

The debate in the Senate on the ratification was long and exciting. Mr. Benton, the leader in opposition, made one speech on the subject lasting through three days. He took the position of the following resolutions announced by him on the 13th :—

“That the ratification of the treaty would be the adoption of the Texan war with Mexico, and would devolve its conclusion upon the United States.

“That the treaty-making power does not extend to the power of making war, and that the President and Senate have no right to make war, either by declaration or adoption.

“That Texas ought to be reunited to the American Union as soon as it can be done with the consent of a majority of the people of the United States and of Texas, and when Mexico shall either consent to the same, or acknowledge the independence of Texas, or cease to prosecute the war against her (the armistice having expired) on a scale commensurate to the conquest of the country.”

In the meantime, becoming impatient with the conduct of the Senate, the President sent to the House a special Texas message, dated June 10, 1844, arguing that annexation should go before negotiations with Mexico, intimating that Texas had proposed an alliance with Great Britain, and urging Congress to act speedily in the matter.

Mr. Benton made these claims :—

“That the ratification of the treaty would be, of itself, war between the United States and Mexico.

"That it would be unjust war.

"That it would be war unconstitutionally made.

"That it would be war upon a weak and groundless pretext."

On the 17th of April Mr. Clay had published a letter in "The National Intelligencer" on the annexation question, taking, in the main, the position of Mr. Benton; holding that annexation and war with Mexico were the same thing; that the will of all the parties should be consulted; that as an acquisition to slavery Texas would still not settle the question or prevent the destruction of the equilibrium of the sections; but that it would be a delightful thing to see Texas and Canada as parts of the Republic, not, however, as sectional acquisitions.

Finally, on the 8th of June, action was taken on the treaty, resulting in its rejection by thirty-five to sixteen votes. James Buchanan and Levi Woodbury voted with the minority. Several Democrats from the Free States voted for the rejection, as William Allen and Benjamin Tappan, of Ohio; Silas Wright, of New York; John M. Niles, of Connecticut; and several others. Archer and Rives, of Virginia, voted against annexation, as did Mangum, Bayard, Benton, Berrien, Clayton, Crittenden, and others from the South.

It must, however, be remembered that many of these Senators who voted against the treaty were in favor of the annexation of Texas, but by a peaceful, if more tardy, process. Mr. Benton, in fact, at once gave notice that he would introduce

a bill for the annexation of Texas by the consent of Mexico.

In the meantime a great effort had been made in South Carolina and other parts of the South to force the treaty through the Senate. Mr. Benton had not overstated the disunion bearing of the whole question. Before the Senate came to a vote on the treaty a meeting in Barnwell District, South Carolina, called upon the Slave States to unite in measures for the annexation of Texas to the South in case the treaty were rejected, and for the purpose of asking the President to call Congress to arrange the terms for the peaceful dissolution of the Union. Other similar meetings were held in that State, and at one of them, in Williamsburg District, the following resolutions were adopted:—

“That, in the opinion of this meeting, the honor and integrity of our Union require the immediate annexation of Texas; and we hold it to be better and more to the interest of the Southern and South-western portions of this confederacy ‘to be out of the Union with Texas, than in it without her.’

“That we cordially approve of the recommendation of a Southern Convention, composed of delegates from the Southern and South-western portions of this confederacy, to deliberate together and adopt such measures as may best promote the great object of annexation; provided such annexation is not previously brought about by joint resolution of Congress, either at its present or an extra session.”

Several States responded favorably to this action, and some attempts were made to fix the place of the convention. Richmond and Nashville were most

prominently mentioned. But these towns resisted furiously. "The Richmond Enquirer" said "that there was not a Democrat in Virginia who would countenance any plot to dissolve the Union." Tennessee made an outcry about desecrating the home of Jackson, and Nashville sent out some spirited resolutions against the whole business.

So the whole secession movement was received with such decided opposition and ridicule that for the present it was abandoned; and the annexationists turned their attention to the Presidential election as the best and most feasible way to remedy their misfortune. With a view of further working up and ripening this scheme for the annexation of Texas the Democrats had put off their nominating convention for several months, and actually induced the Whigs not to be in a hurry about making their nominations. It was no small job to kill Mr. Van Buren. At last, on the 27th of May, 1844, the Democratic Convention met in Baltimore; but notwithstanding all that had been done the annexationists were not well organized, nor sure of success, and Mr. Van Buren really stood above all other candidates. Mr. Calhoun had mainly abandoned his suddenly revived hopes of reaching the Presidential nomination. The annexationists had no easy task before them. But one way was still open, and that was to establish the two-thirds rule, when they saw that Mr. Van Buren could not, in all probability, reach that vote. They were successful, and James K. Polk, an avowed friend of their schemes, and

who was hardly thought of in that connection, became the head of the ticket. South Carolina was not represented in the convention at all. The friends of President Tyler, who had not yet been taken back into the Democratic party as full communicants, did not enter this convention, but met in Baltimore on the same day, in a separate meeting of their own, and organized for business. They were from various parts of the Union; and while some of them were office-holders, most of them were simply supporters of Mr. Tyler and the theory of immediate annexation of Texas regardless of the consequences. If enthusiasm were to be taken for history, it should be believed that this was a large and enthusiastic assemblage. At all events it had one object in view, and that it carried into effect at once. Mr. Tyler was nominated for the Presidency. No step was taken towards naming a Vice-President. No platform was needed. Tyler and Texas were sufficient. In writing to Henry A. Wise about this convention, several years afterwards, Mr. Tyler said:—

“Texas was the great scheme that occupied me. The delegates to the Democratic Convention, or a very large majority of them, had been elected under implied pledges to sustain Van Buren. After his letter repudiating annexation a revulsion had become obvious, but how far it was to operate it was not possible to say. A majority of the delegates at least were believed still to remain in his favor. If he was nominated, the game to be played for Texas was all as one over. What was to be done?

“My friends advised me to remain at rest, and take my chances in the Democratic Convention. It was impossible

to do so. If I suffered my name to be used in that convention, then I became bound to sustain the nomination, even if Mr. Van Buren was the nominee. This could not be. I chose to run no hazard, but to raise the banner of Texas, and convoke my friends to sustain it. This was but a few weeks before the meeting of the convention. To my surprise, the notice which was thus issued brought together a thousand delegates, and from every State in the Union. Many called on me on their way to Baltimore to receive my views. My instructions were: 'Go to Baltimore, make your nomination, and then go home, and leave the thing to work its own results.' I said no more, and was obeyed. The Democratic Convention felt the move. A Texan man or defeat was the choice left, and they took a Texan man. My withdrawal at a suitable time took place, and the result was soon before the world. I acted to insure the success of a great measure, and I acted not altogether without effect. In so doing I kept my own secrets; to have divulged my purposes would have been to have defeated them." (Letters and Times of the Tylers.)

On the 28th the committee having the matter in charge duly notified Mr. Tyler of his nomination, and two days later he formally accepted in the following letter, borrowed from "Letters and Times of the Tylers:"—

WASHINGTON, May 30, 1844.

GENTLEMEN,—Your letter of the 28th instant, announcing to me my nomination for the Presidency for the next four years from the 4th of March next, by a Democratic convention held in Baltimore on the 27th of the present month, and delegated by no inconsiderable portion of the people in every State of the Union, demands my warmest acknowledgments. I have not been an inattentive observer of the course of public opinion in my favor as manifested in numerous primary assemblies, announced by the proceedings and resolutions of large masses of

the people in most of the States of the Union, and to which the delegates lately assembled in Baltimore have so promptly responded; and I beg to assure you, gentlemen, that I am not deficient in due sensibility upon the occasion.

Since my accession to the Presidency I have had to encounter trials of no ordinary character. A great experiment was, under Providence, committed to my hands. It was no other than a test as to the sufficiency of our institutions to meet the contingency which for the first time had occurred in our history of the death of the President, and the succession of a Vice-President to the administration of public affairs. In entering upon the office I had to decide the question whether I would surrender honor, judgment, conscience, and the right of an independent mind, into the hands of a party majority, in whose views and opinions it became very soon obvious I could not concur without such surrender; or whether I should brave all consequences in the vindication of the Constitutional rights of the Executive, and in the discharge of the most sacred obligations of duty to the country. By adopting the first course, I was perfectly aware that my Presidential term would throughout be peaceable and tranquil, and that I should receive the zealous and ardent support of a controlling and dominant party; by pursuing the latter, I should incur the most violent denunciations, the bitterest reproaches, the most unrelenting persecutions, while I could look to no active support from any engaged in the administration of public affairs. The one party, bold and triumphant from the recent exhibition of its strength in the election of 1840, was likely to brook no opposition to its will, no matter upon what reason such opposition might proceed; while the other, still smarting under the signal defeat of its leaders, would not be well inclined to look favorably on one who had, in no small degree, been instrumental in bringing about that defeat. In the meantime I should be left without the means of defense against false ascriptions of motive and base assaults upon my character, which would be reiterated throughout the Union by the affiliated presses, while I should find but a most circumscribed defense in the columns of a single newspaper, and that at the time of a limited circulation. Under all these appalling circumstances I had to make

my election between peace, comfort, and tranquillity on the one side, and the stern and solemn obligations of duty on the other; the first to be obtained by a sacrifice of opinions long cherished, a surrender of the rights of conscience, an abandonment of the obligations arising from my oath of office to support and uphold the Constitution, the loss of my own self-respect, the scorn of all honorable and fair-thinking men, the curses of the present day and the anathemas of futurity—the last to be performed amid the thunders of denunciation and the bitterest outpourings of malice. In choosing between these alternatives I did not hesitate a moment. The country is aware of what followed. Bills were sent up from Congress for my approval which I regarded as violations of the Constitution. They were vetoed. I preferred denunciation to perjury—the anathemas of the moment to bearing in my bosom a Promethean vulture to tear and to devour me. I was immediately loudly and violently denounced by the Whig press; manifestoes were hurled at my head; articles of impeachment, showing alone the malice and weakness in which they originated, were moved against me in the House of Representatives. Every harsh appellation was employed in connection with my name; mobs assembled at midnight at the doors of the Presidential mansion, and the light of burning effigies threw its glare along the streets of some of the cities. Such were the consequences which followed the vetoes. Under these circumstances my reliance was placed upon the people. To them I looked for justification and support. Nor was it denied. The Congressional elections which shortly afterwards followed furnished that justification and gave promise of that support. A large Whig majority in the House of Representatives was swept out of existence, and a still larger Democratic majority was made to occupy its place. The political battle was fought on the issues which duty had compelled me to raise, and an opinion more decisive upon those issues had never taken place. Many of those who had voted for General Harrison and myself, whose political opinions were coincident with my own, united with the Democratic party, and assisted in achieving so great a revolution.

But unhappily for me the leaders of the Democratic party, through the public press, from motives altogether too obvious,

deemed it necessary, without any cause whatever connected with the public administration, to open their attacks upon me, and, forming an alliance with the rabid Whig press, leveled at me the most vindictive assaults. These assaults have been continued on the part of the high contracting parties from 1842 to the present time with only a momentary intermission. The generous and high-minded men who either defended me in public or came to my aid in the Administration were treated by both parties with a proud and haughty disdain. If those friends had voted for General Harrison and myself in 1840 they were expelled by the Whig party; if they had voted for Mr. Van Buren the doors of Tammany Hall were shut against them. They sought no place in the conventions of either party; and nothing was ultimately left them but to band themselves together—to adopt their own organization, and to make their appeal to the intelligence of the people. How that appeal was received is best answered by referring to the numerous meetings of the people in their primary assemblies, in many instances embracing thousands, who, waiting for no conventions, have nominated me to their fellow-citizens as their candidate for the Presidency; and sent up to Baltimore, for the purpose of comparison of views with persons from other sections, delegates to a Democratic Convention, whose proceedings have ratified and confirmed the proceedings of their constituents.

I do not feel myself at liberty to decline the nomination tendered me under such circumstances. There is much in the present condition of the country which would forbid my doing so. My name has become inseparably connected with the great question of the annexation of Texas to the Union. In originating and concluding that negotiation I had anticipated the cordial co-operation of two gentlemen, both of whom were most prominent in the public mind as candidates for the Presidency. That co-operation would have been attended with the immediate withdrawal of my name from the question of the succession. In the consummation of that measure the aspirations of my ambition would have been complete. I should have felt that, as an instrument of Providence, I would have been able in accomplishing for my country the greatest pos-

sible good. The poor and contemptible desire to be in office for the mere sake of office, however exalted, would have had no effect upon me. But such was not the case. Where I had reason to expect support I have met with stern, and, for aught I know, unrelenting opposition. My motives have once more been most violently assailed, and matters have proceeded to such an extremity that the opinion of a learned jurist of the State of New York has been obtained, and is now published to the world, that I have made myself the legitimate subject of impeachment for having negotiated the treaty of annexation, and sought to carry it out by measures which seemed to me to be imperatively called for by honor, by justice, and every consideration of public duty.

I am, therefore, left no alternative. I shall shrink from no responsibility; shall seek to appease no spirit of discontent. If annexation is to be accomplished, it must, I am convinced, be done immediately. Texas is in no condition to delay. She will not stake her interests upon possible, but remote, contingencies. If the present treaty should be ratified, or any measure in any other form shall be presented which will result in success at the present session of Congress, you will leave me at liberty, gentlemen, to pursue the course, in regard to the nomination which you have communicated to me, that my sense of what is due to myself and the country may seem to require. The question with me is between Texas and the Presidency. The latter, even if within my grasp, would not for a moment be permitted to stand in the way of the first. But in the present posture of affairs I can waive no responsibility.

You do me nothing but justice in ascribing to me a firm and unshaken purpose to uphold the political principles which were sanctioned by Jefferson and consecrated by his immediate successors. I yield to no man in the sincerity of my devotion to them; and, while I remain at the head of the Government, it will be my continued effort to sustain and advance them.

Be pleased to accept assurances of my high regard and esteem.

JOHN TYLER.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE RACE—MR. TYLER WITHDRAWS—"THE GLOBE"—THE
POLK-CALHOUN-TYLER INTRIGUE—MR.
BLAIR'S DREAMS.

"THE AURORA," of Philadelphia, and "The Madisonian," of Washington, were advocates of the Presidency of Mr. Tyler. "The Madisonian" had been established by Wm. C. Rives and others as a conservative paper. Its editor at this time was John B. Jones. Besides writing much in his paper in advocacy and defense of Mr. Tyler, Jones sent out thousands of pamphlets urging his claims for re-election upon the people. Tyler clubs were organized in Washington and some other cities; but these were not formidable, and after a time died out. It was clear from the outset that Mr. Tyler could not be elected, could not, perhaps, get a single electoral vote; but it was also clear that there was no such feeling against him throughout the country as a glance at the state of politics at the Capital indicated, and that he would greatly divide and weaken the Democratic vote. With him in the field the annexationists were not yet safe. Annexation was Mr. Tyler's great hobby, and it could not be agreeable to him to think that he was factiously putting himself in the way of its accomplishment. Although

the Democrats would not take him for their leader, he gave them their campaign cry, and put them on the road to success. He was indebted to them for nothing. They owed him everything, more than any of their writers were ever disposed to repay, even in words. He had opened up the whole scheme for the settlement of Oregon, and the acquisition of the magnificent territory on the Pacific. He had been the enthusiastic mover and patron of the Pacific Slope exploration and settlement. He had equipped and sent Fremont over there on two of his grand expeditions. The attention of the country was turned in this direction. Mr. Tyler passed over the whole of this popular campaign stock and the Texas ferment into the hands of the Democratic party. And the contest was made by the Democrats for the Presidency not so much as Democrats as advocates of "Texas and all of Oregon or nothing," or "Texas and 54° 40'." He had worked up the great issues, and the Democrats simply took them up, took his side, and left him out. Indeed, no effort was spared to get him out of the way. Even General Jackson came forward with his letters and influence to induce the President to leave the way clear for Mr. Polk. It was believed that the Abolitionists would weaken the Whig vote to some extent, but whether Mr. Tyler would do so was very questionable. South Carolina became uneasy. She had declared in favor of Texas, or her usual alternative, secession. Something might be done if Mr. Calhoun were retained in the new Cabinet. Mr.

Calhoun and President Tyler had, perhaps, a small grievance of their own. They had exerted themselves to get rid of it, but had not been successful. Mr. Polk could probably do something in this matter. Francis P. Blair and "The Globe" were bitterly opposed to the present management of affairs at Washington, and were little less likely to be a thorn in the side of Mr. Polk should he gain the succession. At all events, in August, 1844, a representative of Mr. Calhoun and South Carolina went on a tour to Tennessee; and Mr. Benton, who is made to tell the story of the intrigue in the next succeeding volume of this work, claims that "The Globe," at least, was to be killed in exchange for the vote of South Carolina. Mr. Calhoun controlled that vote. Mr. Polk was pledged to the same policy as to Texas that was put forward by Mr. Tyler, Mr. Calhoun, and South Carolina. And Mr. Calhoun hoped to be continued in the Polk Cabinet, if it was not so understood. Opposition at Washington disappeared. Mr. Tyler and Mr. Calhoun stood aside when the result of the Columbia intrigue was known. At all events, so claimed Mr. Benton and others, who wanted Texas in another way. But President Tyler's own testimony as to "The Globe" and the motives for his withdrawal from the race must be taken as of first, if not conclusive, importance. Here is his letter of resignation:—

TO MY FRIENDS THROUGHOUT THE UNION:—

The reasons which influenced me in accepting the nomination for the Presidency, made by a convention of my friends in

May last, in Baltimore, have lost much of their original force. I had been not only most violently assailed by the ultraists of both parties, but had been threatened with impeachment for having negotiated a treaty proposing the annexation of Texas to the Union, as a portion of its territory, and for having adopted precautionary measures clearly falling within the range of Executive discretion, to ward off any blow which might have been seriously aimed at the peace and safety of the country in the event of the ratification of the treaty by the Senate. The opinion of a person once ranked amongst the distinguished jurists of the country found its way into the newspapers, apparently as the precursor of such proceeding.

A report had also been made at a previous session of Congress, by a committee of the House of Representatives, which proceeded from a man who filled no limited space in the eye of the world, in which—because of the exercise of the veto power in arrest of the unconstitutional and pernicious measures of a United States Bank, and a donation to the States of so much of the revenue as was derived from the public lands, at a moment of great embarrassment to the Treasury, and when loans were necessary to sustain the Government—I was charged with the commission of grave offenses in the above particulars, and with deserving all the pains and disgrace flowing from the high power of impeachment, a measure, as it was intimated, only not resorted to by the House because of a doubt entertained whether the proceeding would be sustained by public sentiment. I had, it is true, protested against that report as originating in wrong, and dictated by party rancor and malevolence; but my protest was refused a place on the journals of the House, and thus in future times my name might have been tarnished by the fact of a solemn declaration implicating my character, remaining uncontradicted and unreversed on the public journals.

The party majority which had sanctioned a proceeding so unjust, had, it is true, been swept out of existence by the elections which shortly afterwards followed; but at the time of my acceptance of the nomination, although a large and overwhelming majority of the opposite party had been brought into power by the people, as if for the express purpose of sustaining me in what I had done, yet that very party had made no

public movement indicative of a friendly feeling, and a portion of its members, who seemed to control the rest, exhibited the bitterest hostility and the most relentless spirit of opposition. Under these circumstances there was but one course left to me consistent with honor, which was to maintain my position, unmoved by threats and unintimidated by denunciations. Those of my countrymen who had come to my support had done so in a self-sacrificing spirit, without the indulgence of any other expectation than that my character should be vindicated, and that the policy of my Administration should be sustained; and I felt that it would better become me to abide the most signal defeat than to incur the disgrace of deprecating the action of a party, the chief object of whose leaders seemed to be to fasten upon me disgrace. I had also an indistinct hope that the great question of the annexation of Texas might, in some degree, be controlled by the position I occupied.

These motives induced my acceptance of the nomination made by my friends. Before the close of the session of Congress, however, developments were so clearly and distinctly made as to the threatened impeachment, that no trace of such a measure was left. Mr. J. Q. Adams's report implicating my motives and conduct in my vetoes of the Bank and other bills, was deprived of all its force and furtive effect by a report made by a committee, of which Mr. Ellis, of New York, was chairman, accompanied by resolutions, which passed the House of Representatives some few days before the close of the session by a large and commanding majority, not only rescuing my motives from all imputation, but justifying and upholding my policy. The voice of the people in the election of 1842 was thus directly responded to by that of their Representatives, and but little remained for me personally either to expect or desire.

Since the adjournment of Congress the language of many of the leading presses of the country, and resolutions adopted by large assemblages of the people in their primary meetings, have still further indorsed the proceedings of the House in approbation of the acts of the Administration. I could not, however, look exclusively to my own wishes, which would have led me immediately to retire from a contest which seemed no longer to be possessed of an object worthy of much further

attention. But I was not at liberty to do so without first consulting with such of my most intimate and steadfast friends as I could readily confer with; men who had shared with me in much of the abuse which I had encountered, and would partially have participated in all the obloquy, if any, which might in the future attach to me. So far as I have been able to consult them, they have yielded their assent to the course which my own judgment suggests as proper, and I now announce to them and the country my withdrawal from the Presidential canvass.

I can not omit to accompany this public annunciation with a few remarks, addressed to the Republican portion of what was called the Whig party of 1840. I make no appeal to that other portion which was formerly known during the early period of our political history as Federalists, at a later day as National Republicans, and now pass under the general appellation of Whigs. Such an appeal would be wholly out of place, since their political principles are entirely at war with those I have advocated through life. I mean no imputation on their motives or their patriotism. I doubt not that the old Federal party, in the lead of which stood the elder Adams, were as deeply and sincerely convinced of the necessity of the Alien and Sedition Laws as the present is of that of a Bank of the United States, with other measures equally latitudinous, along with the abolition of the veto power, whereby to convert the Government into a mere majority machine; to make it the Government of a single nation, instead of what it is, a political compact between free, sovereign, and independent States, by which so much power, and no more, has been granted to a common agent of all the States, as they esteemed to be necessary for the promotion of their mutual happiness. No; to them I have nothing to say. If I have received their support at any time, it has been, not from attachment to me or my political principles, but from some supposed influence which I might bring to bear, as a secondary agent, in advancing their purpose.

All the obligations which I have received for such reasons have been more than counterbalanced by the untiring opposition which I have encountered at their hands since I attained my present station, and the constant and unmitigated abuse

which their leaders have poured out in a torrent upon my head, designed, as I verily believe, in the first instance, to drive me from the Government, and in the last to overwhelm me with obloquy and reproach. But I have a right to address myself to those who, like myself, co-operated with them in the contest of 1840; who were, and always have been, the advocates of the principles of the old Republican party; whose strenuous efforts have always been directed to preserving the compact of Union unbroken and inviolate; who have sustained at all times the principles of the Republican party of 1798-9; who have participated from time to time in all Republican triumphs; whose fathers were victorious over the elder Adams in the election of Mr. Jefferson, as they themselves were over the younger in the election of General Jackson.

To this portion of the Whig party of 1840 I feel that I have a full right to address myself, and I now seriously put it to them to say, whether any expectation of good to the country which they had formed in the election of General Harrison and myself to the Presidency and Vice-Presidency has been disappointed? Many of us had been thrown into opposition to General Jackson during his last term, having voted for him upon his first and second elections, because of certain doctrines put forth in his proclamation, and because of certain measures which followed that celebrated State paper. Our opposition proceeded from no spirit of faction, but from what we esteemed it to be, a sacred regard to the high and essential principles of the Republican party; and regarding his successor as in a great degree identified with what we esteemed as errors in General Jackson's Administration, our opposition was continued to him. The state and condition of the country also seemed to require change in the general administration. Have you been disappointed in the reform which you promised yourselves by going into the contest? You demanded a rigid economy to be observed in the public expenditures. Have you in this been disappointed? You required accountability on the part of all public agents. Has it not been fulfilled? Let the fact that a defaulter has become almost unknown for the last three years answer the question.

You asked that a course of policy should be adopted which

should purify and reform the currency. Was the currency of the country ever in a better condition? Let the rates of exchanges between all parts of the country answer the inquiry. Has the day ever been when the currency was sounder or the rates of exchange lower? You sought once more to put the mechanical arts in active operation, and to relieve commerce from the blight which had fallen upon it. The first has revived, and the last has unfurled its sails, which now whiten almost every sea. The paralysis which had fallen on public credit, to an extent so great that the poor sum of five millions of dollars of Government stock was offered to European and American capitalists without our being able to find for it a purchaser, has passed away, and a well supplied exchequer gives evidence, not only of the expansion of trade, but of the stable basis on which rests the public credit.

The very stock for which no bidders could at one time be found now readily commands in the market an advance of fifteen or twenty dollars in the hundred. In the meantime, I submit it to you to say, whether the principles of the Republican party have not been closely observed in all that has been done. Did those principles require that we should recommence a new cycle of twenty years, the predecessor of which a Bank of the United States had fulfilled in 1836—beginning by increasing the derangements of business for years, attended in its mid career with comparative prosperity, then resorting to efforts by all its large means to force a recharter, and ending its existence amid the curses and denunciations of the many it had ruined. Most of you had, like myself, through all time, pronounced the Bank to be unconstitutional.

Had your opinion on this subject undergone a change in 1840, and did you contemplate that General Harrison and myself, who during the whole contest avowed our opinions to be unchanged in that respect in numerous addresses to the public, would be deserving of denunciation if either of us should refuse to perjure ourselves by sanctioning a Bank charter, which, believing it to be unconstitutional, our solemn oath of office required us to vote against or veto? Tell me, moreover, brother Republicans of 1840, had you then brought yourselves to the conclusion that, even admitting a possible abuse of the veto

power, it was proper to erase from the Constitution that great barrier and check to unconstitutional and highly inexpedient legislation, thereby making the will of Congress supreme, and installing the majority of that body in the full possession of all the powers of Government? Or did you, or do you now, still cling to the opinion in which the qualified veto originated, that a government without checks and balances is the worst form of oligarchy, and that too many guards, in order to secure public liberty, can not be thrown over its different departments?

If, indeed, you are advocates of a change so vital as that proposed, then may not only the Garrisons and Tappans of our own country rejoice, but a shout should ascend from the Abolition convention "of the whole world" at the fact that our Federal system had given way before the power of a consolidated Government, whose will, uttered forth by sectional majorities, was absolute, admitting of no check or resistance from any quarter whatever. If, indeed, these be your opinions, then have I most grievously disappointed the hopes in which you indulged in connection with my election and my Administration. I must, nevertheless, most solemnly aver, that had I been aware that such would have been expected and required of me—if I could have believed that you, whose candidate I was peculiarly considered, and to conciliate whom I was nominated for the Vice-Presidency, would have required of me in the contingency which unhappily occurred—that I should commence my Administration with an act of perjury, and sanction measures abhorrent to every principle of my past life, and at war with the prosperity of the country and the continuance of liberty, I would not have suffered my name, humble as it was, to have been breathed in the canvass. No; I claim the proud privilege of an American citizen to think for myself on all subjects, and to act in pursuance of my own convictions, and it would require a total change of my nature in order to convert me into a mere instrument of party or of party dictation.

I would appeal not only to yourselves, but to all my countrymen, to say whether, in the matters appertaining to our foreign affairs, they anticipated more success in the adjustment of difficulties and in the formation of highly important treaties than it has been my province to cause to be negotiated? Long-

standing difficulties have been adjusted—difficulties which threatened most seriously the peace of the country. Nor has any opportunity been lost for enlarging the commerce of the country, and giving new markets to our agricultural and manufactured products. If the country has not reaped full fruition of benefit from all the treaties thus negotiated, it surely has not been the fault of the Administration. The loss of two of those treaties through the action of the Senate can not but be deplored by me as great public calamities. By the treaty with the German States we had opened the way to a more extended commerce with twenty-seven millions of people in our cotton, tobacco, rice, and lard, at duties on tobacco, rice, and lard greatly reduced, and with a stipulation for the free admission of cotton; while we had agreed to receive at somewhat reduced duties articles from those States which entered into the most limited competition, if at all, with a few similar articles of American product.

The treaty was particularly interesting from the fact that, for the first time, after repeated struggles on the part of my predecessors to accomplish a reduction on tobacco, the Government had succeeded in doing so. It was negotiated under resolutions originating with the tobacco States, and with the presumed sanction of Congress, who had raised, as it is believed, the mission to Vienna from a second to a first-rate mission, with direct reference to the tobacco interest, and had also appropriated a sum of money some years ago to enable the Executive to employ an agent in Germany to acquire information as to the tobacco trade, the services of which agent had only ceased a short time prior to the negotiation of the treaty. My hope still, however, is that the benefit of the treaty, and the treaty itself, may not be lost to the country. I think it proper to add, that there was no design to deprive the House of Representatives of any rightful and Constitutional action over the subject which it might properly exercise. It was, on the contrary, my intention to have submitted the treaty, and all the papers calculated to elucidate it, to the House of Representatives, if it had been ratified by the Senate, for such action as they might have deemed it proper to adopt—a course pursued in all cases in which the action of the House is

required to vote supplies of money or fulfill any other object falling within the scope of their power.

In negotiating the treaty for the annexation of Texas, which was rejected by the Senate, motives have been ascribed to the Administration which had no place in its mind or heart. One gentleman, occupying a prominent place in the Democratic party, whether for good or evil it does not become me to say, has assigned in an address, recently delivered in Missouri, two prominent motives for its negotiation: 1st, personal ambition; and 2d, a purpose to dissolve the Union. Mr. Clay, also, in a recent letter written to the editor of a newspaper in Alabama, has called it *infamous*, and ascribed to it in its origin, *sinister objects*. I repel both their assaults upon the treaty and its negotiators. What object of mere personal ambition in any way connected with office could have influenced the Administration in negotiating the treaty? The public archives furnished the strongest reasons to believe that the treaty would have met the unqualified approval of both Mr. Clay and Mr. Van Buren. While the one was Secretary of State to Mr. Adams, and the other to General Jackson, each in his turn attempted to obtain the annexation of Texas. Mr. Clay's negotiations were carried on with Mexico in the third year of her revolutionary struggle, while Spain regarded her as a revolted province, and her armies were in possession of many of the strongholds of the country. What reason, then, could I have had for supposing for an instant that a treaty with Texas, after eight years of actual independence, with no Mexican soldier within her territory, and subject only to occasional border interruptions, could or would have met with opposition from him or his friends? And meeting with no such opposition on the part either of Mr. Van Buren or Mr. Clay, and their friends, it would puzzle a sounder casuist than I profess to be to conceive in what possible way it could have interrupted the relations of those two gentlemen, who stood at the moment at the head of their respective parties, and were looked upon by all as competitors for the Presidency. It is well known that, when the negotiation for the acquisition of Texas was commenced, and up to the period succeeding the signing of the treaty, it was my confident conviction, expressed to many, that it would,

from the circumstances I have stated, receive the support both of Mr. Clay and Mr. Van Buren, so that neither would be affected by its negotiation.

If it had been charged that the Administration was prompted by the ambition of securing the greatest boon to the country, and the whole country, in the acquisition of a territory so important in itself, and so inseparably connected with the interest of every State in the Union, and every interest of the Union, I would have plead guilty without a moment of hesitation. I confess I felt ambitious to add another bright star to the American constellation. It would have been a source of pride to me, if that measure had been carried, to have witnessed from the retirement that awaits me the annual expansion of our coastwise and foreign trade, and the increased prosperity of our agriculture and manufactures through the rapid growth of Texas, which would have followed the ratification of the treaty. Yes, I freely confess that this would have furnished me an unfailing source of gratification to the end of my life. I should have seen, also, the union of the States becoming stronger and stronger through their reciprocal affection; local jealousies suppressed and fanatical schemes and schemers alike prostrate. I should have witnessed the blessed results of our federative system as it embraced the finest country in the world, and brought under its influence a people devoted, like ourselves to the maintenance and preservation of free government.

This was the kind of ambition which prompted the negotiation of the treaty. Its ratification was the sole honor which I coveted, and that I now desire. What *sinister motives* could have originated the negotiation at this time that did not exist in 1827? What was there *now* to have rendered a treaty *infamous* which did not exist then? If it be said that we had a treaty of limits with Mexico, I ask if, in 1827, we had not also a treaty of limits with Spain? We had recognized the independence of Mexico, and, therefore, virtually claimed that we had a perfect right to treat with her for the annexation of Texas, and, in fact, if we had so pleased, for Mexico entire. Eight years ago we recognized Texas as independent, and surely our right to negotiate with her implied no worse faith than in 1827 to negotiate with Mexico for her.

The idea that, because of the existence of a treaty of limits with any nation, we must forever thereafter deny to all parts of the territory of such nation the right of revolution or change, can only excite with an American citizen a smile. Was it deemed necessary, in 1827, to consult the States, to consult the Senate, or to consult the House of Representatives, or the people? Was it considered necessary to obtain the assent of *every* State, as would seem now to be proposed, before forming a treaty of annexation? If the assent of every State is necessary, then may we bid adieu to the prospect of annexation now or hereafter. The Constitution devolves the treaty-making power on two-thirds of the States, through their Senators, and it is altogether a new doctrine that a treaty should not be negotiated without the assent of all.

Danger to the Union through the exercise of the power of a Constitutional majority in the *making* of a treaty, is a doctrine for the first time advanced, and having no foundation in point of fact. I regard the preservation of the Union as the first great American interest. I equally disapprove of all threats of its dissolution, whether they proceed from the North or the South. The glory of my country, its safety and its prosperity, alike depend on Union; and he who would contemplate its destruction, even for a moment, and form plans to accomplish it, deserves the deepest anathemas of the human race.

I believed, and still believe, that the annexation of Texas would add to its strength, and serve to perpetuate it for ages yet to come; and my best efforts, while I remain in office, will be directed to securing its acquisition, either now or at a future day. Whether any efforts will avail to secure this object, since the rejection of the treaty, remains still to be seen. I abandon all hope upon the subject, if it shall be esteemed necessary to obtain for it the approval of every State. The case rarely occurs that any treaty receives the unanimous approval of the Senate.

I have been called upon, in justice to myself, to make these remarks in withdrawing from the position in which my friends had placed me. I might present other inquiries growing out of the course of the Administration, both in regard to our domestic and foreign relations, as to which principles have been

maintained which may arrest the attention of future and even remote Administrations; but let what I have said suffice. All that I ask of my countrymen is a candid review of my acts, and an impartial comparison of the condition of the country now with what it was three years ago. I appeal from the vituperation of the present day to the pen of impartial history, in the full confidence that neither my motives nor my acts will bear the interpretation which has, for *sinister purposes*, been placed upon them.

JOHN TYLER.

Of his connection with the intrigue about "The Globe" Mr. Tyler wrote many years later in the following letter to Thomas Ritchie:—

SHERWOOD FOREST, January 9, 1851.

MY DEAR SIR,—The charge of Mr. John C. Rives of collusion between Mr. Polk and myself in 1844, with General Cameron as the instrument, for the destruction of the "Globe" newspaper, edited at the time by Messrs. Blair and Rives, would most probably have been permitted by me to have descended without a word of comment to the same common tomb with a thousand other falsehoods, but for the emphatic manner in which you refer to me in the "Union" of the 2d of January, which paper did not reach me till the day before yesterday. Not being a subscriber to either the "Union" or "Globe," I did not know of the existence of the controversy between yourself and Mr. Rives, and of course was ignorant of the fact that my name was figuring in it until copies of both the papers reached me by our last mail. I propose to respond to the allegations of Mr. Rives with as much brevity as possible. His charge consists of two allegations, the first embracing Mr. Polk and myself, the second, Mr. Polk, Mr. Cameron, of Pennsylvania, and myself. By the first I am represented as making an overture to Mr. Polk as the condition precedent to my withdrawal from the Presidential canvass of 1844, which overture is said to have been accepted by Mr. Polk, that in the event of his election to the Presidency he should not make the "Globe" newspaper, edited by Messrs. Blair and Rives, the official organ of his Administration; and secondly, to enable General

Cameron to purchase out the editors of the "Globe," he being the instrument selected by Mr. Polk and myself for the accomplishment of that purpose, it was arranged that I should cause to be deposited in some bank at Middletown, Pennsylvania, over which General Cameron is said by Mr. Rives to have had complete control, fifty thousand dollars of the public moneys, which was accordingly done in November, 1844, and which money Mr. Polk was not to withdraw from the bank until 1847, and then by small amounts. Such is the substance of Mr. Rives' allegations.

As to the first allegation, I solemnly declare that I never made or authorized to be made to Mr. Polk any such overture as that described, or any other of any sort or description as a preliminary to my withdrawing from the canvass, and that if any one approached him in my name with a view to urge any such stipulation or overture, he did so without a shadow of authority from me, and in utter ignorance on my part of his having done so. Nor had I the slightest conceivable knowledge of Mr. Polk's intentions upon the subject of an official organ, not having in any manner or at any time approached him in regard to it. I mean to make this statement as broad as language can make it. My reasons for withdrawing my name from the canvass are set forth in my public address of August, 1844, "To my friends throughout the Union." The convention of my friends, which assembled in Baltimore at the same time with the Democratic convention, had by its prompt action not a little aided, as I believe, in inducing the Democratic convention to nominate a candidate favorable to the admission of Texas into the Union, and I had nothing left of a political nature to desire other than what is set forth in that address.

The foregoing declaration might well preclude any reply to Mr. Rives' second allegation in regard to Mr. Cameron, who is represented as the instrument selected by Mr. Polk and myself to carry out the alleged agreement. There being no such agreement, there could be no agent or instrument of any sort required. But the allegation is of too gross a nature to merit only an inferential negative. Not content with representing Mr. Polk and myself as carrying on an intrigue, we are accused of violating a high public trust by using the public

money for consummating such intrigue. The lips of Mr. Polk are sealed in death; but he must have lived to little purpose if he had not secured himself a sufficiency of public confidence in his honesty to shield his character against such an imputation as is now attempted to be cast upon it. For myself, I emphatically declare that I never exchanged a word with General Cameron, or authorized any other to do so for me, on the subject of the purchase of the "Globe" newspaper, and I have no knowledge of the entertainment of any wish, willingness, or intention on his part to purchase that newspaper. If fifty thousand dollars, or any other sum, was placed on deposit with the Middletown bank, of which at this time I have not the slightest recollection, but which may very well have been, I doubt not that it was done for reasons entirely satisfactory to the Secretary of the Treasury, and on securities of the most ample character; and if Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury under Mr. Polk, did not withdraw the funds until 1847, and then in the manner set forth by Mr. Rives, it proceeded doubtless from considerations having exclusive reference to the public interests, and from no other. He is fully equal to the task of explaining his own course. Upon the expiration of my term, I left in the Treasury from seven to eight millions of dollars of surplus funds, all resting on most perfect securities, their safety increased by the fact that over-large sums were not deposited with any.

Here I take leave of the subject, and subscribe myself, my dear sir, with sentiments of high respect, yours, etc.,

JOHN TYLER.

Of Mr. Blair, "The Globe," the intrigue, and Texas negotiation, Mr. Tyler again wrote to his son Robert in the following letter taken from "Letters and Times of the Tylers:"—

SHERWOOD FOREST, May 9, 1856.

DEAR ROBERT,—I have read "Blair's Dreams" with mingled feelings of contempt and amusement; contempt for the puerile weakness of the egotist, and amusement at the deeply laid plots and intrigues for the destruction of F. P. Blair, concocted

and urged by so very many persons. He is so wrapped up in his own importance that he does not see that he wrote his own epitaph before Mr. Polk had become a nominee for the Presidency. He opposed the Ashburton Treaty and the annexation of Texas. If the first disturbed him in his position, the last sealed his fate. The most ludicrous part of the business is that he gives publicity to General Jackson's letters to him, written in great confidence, and in the last hours of his existence (letters, by the way, which, for the fame's sake of General Jackson, should never have been published), when he disregarded altogether the advice and pressing appeals of the General constantly urged upon the public in favor of annexation. In urging upon the Calhoun-Tyler Administration a conspiracy against the Union in the conception of that measure, with what grace has he omitted all implication of General Jackson in the conspiracy? The idea that Calhoun had anything to do with originating the measure is as absurd as it is designed to be wicked. I exchanged no political views with Calhoun at all until he became a member of the Cabinet, and, at the time of my directing Upshur to enter upon the negotiation, Calhoun was in private life. The knowledge of what was designed was confined to Upshur, Nelson, and Van Zandt; and if Van Zandt had possessed powers to negotiate, the treaty would have been negotiated in a week; and furthermore, if General Henderson had reached the city before Calhoun, John Nelson, the Secretary *ad interim*, would have concluded the matter. Calhoun reached before Henderson, and therefore did what Upshur and Nelson would have done as well. As to the convention in Baltimore, you know that Calhoun had no more to do with it than a man in Kamtchatka; and as to any intrigue with Polk about the "Globe," that is merely the old tale of John C. Rives, in his controversy with Mr. Ritchie, revamped for the occasion. I put the matter effectually to rest at that day, and shall hardly trouble myself about it again. I do not believe that the world ever saw a more perfectly unprincipled set than that which surrounded Jackson at Washington. But the survivors of them can not fret me, and shall not disturb me; and I leave Blair and all his tribe to lament over their downfall, without interfering with their sorrows.

We are all pretty well again, and Mrs. Beeckman, who has been quite sick, is greatly improved. With love to all, your father,

JOHN TYLER.

From these letters it must be seen that Mr. Tyler was not personally greatly concerned about the disposition to be made of "The Globe," nor involved in the intrigues with his successor. He was certainly not the man to sell his chances for the Presidency for the suppression of a newspaper merely. On the 21st of August, 1844, Mr. Tyler issued his letter of withdrawal; and as Mr. Benton says the Carolina friend of Mr. Calhoun did not reach Tennessee until in that month, Mr. Tyler could have known nothing about this mission, or at least could not have been influenced in his action by anything it really accomplished. That General Jackson went to his grave with the conviction that Mr. Blair and his "Globe" had been badly treated, and that Mr. Polk and his predecessor were concerned in the evil business in some way, there can be no doubt. That Mr. Blair, Mr. J. C. Rives, and others, were dishonest in their statements about the whole matter it would not be easy to prove. Some allowances may be made, too, for Mr. Benton's vivid and matter-of-fact narrations. Mr. Tyler was not a man of warlike disposition, and did not believe that the steps he was taking for the annexation of Texas should lead to war with Mexico. And although at last he was forced to promise the protection of the Government to Texas on the condition of her accepting the treaty of annexation, and to send the army to the border for that purpose,

he believed war would not result. Nor did he ever approve of the course of his successor, which precipitated the war on account of Texas, although, when it was begun, as others in his party, he stood in favor of its prosecution to a satisfactory termination.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONGRESS IN SESSION—MR. TYLER'S LAST ANNUAL MESSAGE—OREGON.

ON the 2d of December, 1844, Congress met for the last session under Mr. Tyler's Administration, and on the following day the President sent in his

FOURTH ANNUAL MESSAGE.

December 3, 1844.

TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES:—

We have continued cause for expressing our gratitude to the Supreme Ruler of the universe, for the benefits and blessings which our country, under his kind providence, has enjoyed during the past year. Notwithstanding the exciting scenes through which we have passed, nothing has occurred to disturb the general peace, or to derange the harmony of our political system. The great moral spectacle has been exhibited of a Nation, approximating in number to twenty millions of people, having performed the high and important function of electing their Chief Magistrate for the term of four years, without the commission of any acts of violence, or the manifestation of a spirit of insubordination to the laws. The great and inestimable right of suffrage has been exercised by all who were invested with it, under the laws of the different States, in a spirit dictated alone by a desire, in the selection of the agent, to advance the interests of the country, and to place beyond jeopardy the institutions under which it is our happiness to live. That the deepest interest has been manifested by all our

countrymen in the result of the election, is not less true than highly creditable to them. Vast multitudes have assembled from time to time, at various places, for the purpose of canvassing the merits and pretensions of those who were presented for their suffrages; but no armed soldiery has been necessary to restrain within proper limits the popular zeal, or to prevent violent outbreaks. A principle much more controlling was found in the love of order and obedience to the laws, which, with mere individual exceptions, everywhere possesses the American mind, and controls with an influence far more powerful than hosts of armed men. We can not dwell upon this picture without recognizing in it that deep and devoted attachment, on the part of the people, to the institutions under which we live, which proclaims their perpetuity. The great objection which has always prevailed against the election by the people, of their chief executive officer, has been the apprehension of tumults and disorders, which might involve in ruin the entire Government. A security against this is found, not only in the fact before alluded to, but in the additional fact that we live under a confederacy embracing already twenty-six States, no one of which has power to control the election. The popular vote in each State is taken at the time appointed by the laws, and such vote is announced by the electoral college, without reference to the decision of other States. The right of suffrage, and the mode of conducting the election, are regulated by the laws of each State; and the election is distinctly federative in all its prominent features. Thus it is, that, unlike what might be the results under a consolidated system, riotous proceedings, should they prevail, could only affect the elections in single States, without disturbing, to any dangerous extent, the tranquillity of others. The great experiment of a political confederation—each member of which is supreme as to all matters appertaining to its local interests and its internal peace and happiness, while, by a voluntary compact with others, it confides to the united power of all, the protection of its citizens in matters not domestic—has been so far crowned with complete success. The world has witnessed its rapid growth in wealth and population; and under the guidance and direction of a superintending Providence, the developments of the past may

be regarded but as the shadowing forth of the mighty future. In the bright prospects of that future we shall find, as patriots and philanthropists, the highest inducements to cultivate and cherish a love of union, and to frown down every measure or effort which may be made to alienate the States, or the people of the States, in sentiment and feeling, from each other. A rigid and close adherence to the terms of our political compact, and above all, a sacred observance of the guarantees of the Constitution, will preserve union on a foundation which can not be shaken; while personal liberty is placed beyond hazard or jeopardy. The guarantees of religious freedom, of the freedom of the press, of the liberty of speech, of the trial by jury, of the habeas corpus, and of the domestic institutions of each of the States, leaving the private citizen in the full exercise of the high and ennobling attributes of his nature, and to each State the privilege (which can only be judiciously exerted by itself) of consulting the means best calculated to advance its own happiness,—these are the great and important guarantees of the Constitution, which the lovers of liberty must cherish, and the advocates of union must ever cultivate. Preserving these, and avoiding all interpolations by forced construction, under the guise of an imagined expediency, upon the Constitution, the influence of our political system is destined to be as actively and as beneficially felt on the distant shores of the Pacific as it is now on those of the Atlantic Ocean. The only formidable impediments in the way of its successful expansion (time and space) are so far in the progress of modification by the improvements of the age, as to render no longer speculative the ability of Representatives from that remote region to come up to the Capitol, so that their constituents shall participate in all the benefits of Federal legislation. Thus it is that, in the progress of time, the inestimable principles of civil liberty will be enjoyed by millions yet unborn, and the great benefits of our system of government be extended to now distant and uninhabited regions. In view of the vast wilderness yet to be reclaimed, we may well invite the lover of freedom of every land to take up his abode among us, and assist us in the great work of advancing the standard of civilization, and giving a wider spread to the arts and refinements of cultivated life. Our prayers should

evermore be offered up to the Father of the universe, for his wisdom to direct us in the path of our duty, so as to enable us to consummate these high purposes.

One of the strongest objections which have been urged against confederacies by writers on government is the liability of the members to be tampered with by foreign governments, or the people of foreign States, either in their local affairs, or in such as affected the peace of others, or endangered the safety of the whole confederacy. We can not hope to be entirely exempt from such attempts on our peace and safety. The United States are becoming too important in population and resources not to attract the observation of other nations. It therefore may in the progress of time occur that opinions entirely abstract in the States in which they may prevail, and in no degree affecting their domestic institutions, may be artfully but secretly encouraged with a view to undermine the Union. Such opinions may become the foundation of political parties, until, at last, the conflict of opinion, producing an alienation of friendly feeling among the people of the different States, may involve in one general destruction the happy institutions under which we live. It should ever be borne in mind that what is true in regard to individuals is equally so in regard to States. An interference of one in the affairs of another is the fruitful source of family dissensions and neighborhood disputes; and the same cause affects the peace, happiness, and prosperity of States. It may be most devoutly hoped that the good sense of the American people will ever be ready to repel all such attempts, should they ever be made.

There has been no material change in our foreign relations since my last annual message to Congress. With all the powers of Europe we continue on the most friendly terms. Indeed, it affords me much satisfaction to state that at no former period has the peace of that enlightened and important quarter of the globe ever been apparently more firmly established. The conviction that peace is the true policy of nations would seem to be growing and becoming deeper among the enlightened everywhere; and there is no people who have a stronger interest in cherishing the sentiment, and adopting the means of preserving and giving it permanence, than those of the United States.

Among these the first and most effective are, no doubt, the strict observance of justice, and the honest and punctual fulfillment of all engagements. But it is not to be forgotten that, in the present state of the world, it is no less necessary to be ready to enforce their observance and fulfillment in reference to ourselves than to observe and fulfill them on our part in regard to others.

Since the close of our last session a negotiation has been formally entered upon between the Secretary of State and her Britannic Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary residing at Washington, relative to the rights of their respective nations in and over the Oregon Territory. That negotiation is still pending. Should it, during your session, be brought to a definitive conclusion, the result will be promptly communicated to Congress. I would, however, again call your attention to the recommendations contained in previous messages designed to protect and facilitate emigration to that territory. The establishment of military posts at suitable points upon the extended line of land travel would enable our citizens to emigrate in comparative safety to the fertile regions below the Falls of the Columbia, and make the provision of the existing convention for the joint occupation of the territory by the subjects of Great Britain and the citizens of the United State more available than heretofore to the latter. These posts would constitute places of rest for the weary emigrant, where he would be sheltered securely against the danger of attack from the Indians, and be enabled to recover from the exhaustion of a long line of travel. Legislative enactments should also be made which should spread over him the ægis of our laws, so as to afford protection to his person and property when he shall have reached his distant home. In this latter respect the British government has been much more careful of the interests of such of her people as are to be found in that country than have the United States. She has made necessary provision for their security and protection against the acts of the viciously disposed and lawless, and her emigrant reposes in safety under the panoply of her laws. Whatever may be the result of the pending negotiation, such measures are necessary. It will afford me the greatest pleasure to witness a happy and favorable

termination to the existing negotiation upon terms compatible with the public honor; and the best efforts of the Government will continue to be directed to this end.

It would have given me the highest gratification in this my last annual communication to Congress to have been able to announce to you the complete and entire settlement and adjustment of other matters in difference between the United States and the government of her Britannic Majesty which were adverted to in a previous message. It is so obviously the interest of both countries, in respect to the large and valuable commerce which exists between them, that all causes of complaint, however inconsiderable, should be with the greatest promptitude removed, that it must be regarded as cause of regret that any unnecessary delays should be permitted to intervene. It is true that, in a pecuniary point of view, the matters alluded to are altogether insignificant in amount when compared with the ample resources of that great nation; but they nevertheless—more particularly that limited class which arise under seizures and detentions of American ships on the coast of Africa, upon the mistaken supposition indulged in at the time the wrong was committed of their being engaged in the slave-trade—deeply affect the sensibilities of this Government and people. Great Britain, having recognized her responsibility to repair all such wrongs by her action in other cases, leaves nothing to be regretted upon the subject as to all cases arising prior to the Treaty of Washington than the delay in making suitable reparation in such of them as fall mainly within the principle of others which she has long since adjusted. The injury inflicted by delays in the settlement of these claims falls with severity upon the individual claimants, and makes a strong appeal to her magnanimity and sense of justice for a speedy settlement. Other matters, arising out of the construction of existing treaties, also remain unadjusted, and will continue to be urged upon her attention.

The labors of the joint commission appointed by the two governments to run the dividing-line established by the Treaty of Washington were, unfortunately, much delayed in the commencement of the season by the failure of Congress, at its last session, to make a timely appropriation of funds to meet the

expenses of the American party, and by other causes. The United States Commissioner, however, expresses his expectation that, by increased diligence and energy, the party will be able to make up for lost time.

We continue to receive assurances of the most friendly feelings on the part of all the other European powers, with each and all of whom it is so obviously our interest to cultivate the most amicable relations. Nor can I anticipate the occurrence of any event which would be likely in any degree to disturb those relations. Russia, the great northern power, under the judicious sway of her emperor, is constantly advancing in the road of science and improvement; while France, guided by the counsels of her wise sovereign, pursues a course calculated to consolidate the general peace. Spain has obtained a breathing-spell of some duration from the internal convulsions which have through so many years marred her prosperity; while Austria, the Netherlands, Prussia, Belgium, and the other powers of Europe, reap a rich harvest of blessings from the prevailing peace.

I informed the two houses of Congress, in my message of December last, that instructions had been given to Mr. Wheaton, our Minister at Berlin, to negotiate a treaty with the Germanic States composing the Zoll-Verein, if it could be done—stipulating, as far as it was practicable to accomplish it, for a reduction of the heavy and onerous duties levied on our tobacco and other leading articles of agricultural production, and yielding in return, on our part, a reduction of duties on such articles, the product of their industry, as should not come into competition, or but a limited one, with articles the product of our manufacturing industry. The Executive, in giving such instructions, considered itself as acting in strict conformity with the wishes of Congress, as made known through several measures which it had adopted, all directed to the accomplishment of this important result. The treaty was, therefore, negotiated, by which essential reductions were secured in the duties levied by the Zoll-Verein on tobacco, rice, and lard, accompanied by a stipulation for the admission of raw cotton free of duty. In exchange for which highly important concessions, a reduction of duties imposed by the laws of the

United States on a variety of articles, most of which were admitted free of all duty under the act of Congress commonly known as the Compromise Law, and but few of which were produced in the United States, was stipulated for on our part. This treaty was communicated to the Senate at an early day of its last session, but not acted upon until near its close; when, for the want (as I am bound to presume) of full time to consider it, it was laid upon the table. This procedure had the effect of virtually rejecting it, in consequence of a stipulation contained in the treaty, that its ratifications should be exchanged on or before a day which has already passed. The Executive, acting upon the fair inference that the Senate did not intend its absolute rejection, gave instructions to our Minister at Berlin to reopen the negotiation so far as to obtain an extension of time for the exchange of ratifications. I regret, however, to say that his efforts in this respect have been unsuccessful. I am nevertheless not without hope that the great advantages which were intended to be secured by the treaty may yet be realized.

I am happy to inform you that Belgium has, by an "*arrêté royal*," issued in July last, assimilated the flag of the United States to her own, so far as the direct trade between the two countries is concerned. This measure will prove of great service to our shipping interest, the trade having been heretofore carried on chiefly in foreign bottoms. I flatter myself that she will speedily resort to a modification of her system relating to the tobacco-trade, which would decidedly benefit the agriculture of the United States, and operate to the mutual advantage of both countries.

No definitive intelligence has yet been received from our Minister of the conclusion of a treaty with the Chinese empire; but enough is known to induce the strongest hopes that the mission will be crowned with success.

With Brazil our relations continue on the most friendly footing. The commercial intercourse between that growing empire and the United States is becoming daily of greater importance to both; and it is to the interest of both that the firmest relations of amity and good-will should continue to be cultivated between them.

The Republic of New Grenada still withholds (notwithstanding the most persevering efforts have been employed by our Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Blackford, to produce a different result) indemnity in the case of the brig *Morris*. And the Congress of Venezuela, although an arrangement has been effected between our Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of that government for the payment of eighteen thousand dollars in discharge of its liabilities in the same case, has altogether neglected to make provision for its payment. It is to be hoped that a sense of justice will soon induce a settlement of these claims.

Our late Minister to Chili, Mr. Pendleton, has returned to the United States without having effected an adjustment in the second claim of the *Macedonian*, which is delayed on grounds altogether frivolous and untenable. Mr. Pendleton's successor has been directed to urge the claim in the strongest terms; and, in the event of a failure to obtain a prompt adjustment, to report the fact to the Executive at as early a day as possible, so that the whole matter may be communicated to Congress.

At your last session I submitted to the attention of Congress the convention with the Republic of Peru, of the 17th of March, 1841, providing for the adjustment of the claims of citizens of the United States against that Republic; but no definitive action was taken upon the subject. I again invite to it your attention and prompt action.

In my last annual message I felt it to be my duty to make known to Congress, in terms both plain and emphatic, my opinion in regard to the war which has so long existed between Mexico and Texas, which, since the battle of San Jacinto, has consisted altogether of predatory incursions, attended by circumstances revolting to humanity. I repeat now what I then said, that after eight years of feeble and ineffectual efforts to reconquer Texas, it was time that the war should have ceased. The United States had a direct interest in the question. The contiguity of the two nations to our territory was but too well calculated to involve our peace. Unjust suspicions were engendered in the mind of one or the other of the belligerents against us; and, as a necessary consequence, American interests were made to suffer, and our peace became daily endangered.

In addition to which it must have been obvious to all that the exhaustion produced by the war subjected both Mexico and Texas to the interference of other powers, which, without the interposition of this Government, might eventuate in the most serious injury to the United States. This Government, from time to time, exerted its friendly offices to bring about a termination of hostilities upon terms honorable alike to both the belligerents. Its efforts in this behalf proved unavailing. Mexico seemed, almost without an object, to persevere in the war; and no other alternative was left the Executive but to take advantage of the well-known dispositions of Texas, and to invite her to enter into a treaty for annexing her territory to that of the United States.

Since your last session Mexico has threatened to renew the war, and has either made, or proposes to make, formidable preparations for invading Texas. She has issued decrees and proclamations, preparatory to the commencement of hostilities, full of threats revolting to humanity, and which, if carried into effect, would arouse the attention of all Christendom. This new demonstration of feeling, there is too much reason to believe, has been produced in consequence of the negotiation of the late treaty of annexation with Texas. The Executive, therefore, could not be indifferent to such proceedings; and it felt it to be due, as well to itself as to the honor of the country, that a strong representation should be made to the Mexican government upon the subject. This was accordingly done, as will be seen by the copy of the accompanying dispatch from the Secretary of State to the United States envoy at Mexico. Mexico has no right to jeopard the peace of the world by urging any longer a useless and fruitless contest. Such a condition of things would not be tolerated on the European continent. Why should it be on this? A war of desolation, such as is now threatened by Mexico, can not be waged without involving our peace and tranquillity. It is idle to believe that such a war could be looked upon with indifference by our own citizens inhabiting adjoining States; and our neutrality would be violated in despite of all efforts on the part of the Government to prevent it. The country is settled by emigrants from the United States under invitations held out

to them by Spain and Mexico. Those emigrants have left behind them friends and relatives who would not fail to sympathize with them in their difficulties, and who would be led by those sympathies to participate in their struggles, however energetic the action of the Government to prevent it. Nor would the numerous and formidable bands of Indians—the most warlike to be found in any land, which occupy the extensive regions contiguous to the States of Arkansas and Missouri, and who are in possession of large tracts of country within the limits of Texas—be likely to remain passive. The inclinations of those numerous tribes lead them invariably to war whenever pretexts exist.

Mexico has no just ground of displeasure against this Government or people for negotiating the treaty. What interest of hers was affected by the treaty? She was despoiled of nothing, since Texas was forever lost to her. The independence of Texas was recognized by several of the leading powers of the earth. She was free to treat; free to adopt her own line of policy; free to take the course which she believed was best calculated to secure her happiness. Her government and people decided on annexation to the United States; and the Executive saw, in the acquisition of such a territory, the means of advancing their permanent happiness and glory. What principle of good faith, then, was violated? what rule of political morals trampled under foot? So far as Mexico herself was concerned, the measure should have been regarded by her as highly beneficial. Her inability to reconquer Texas had been exhibited, I repeat, by the eight (now nine) years of fruitless and ruinous contest. In the meantime Texas has been growing in population and resources. Emigration has flowed into her territory from all parts of the world, in a current which continues to increase in strength. Mexico requires a permanent boundary between that young Republic and herself. Texas, at no distant day, if she continues separate and detached from the United States, will inevitably seek to consolidate her strength by adding to her domain the contiguous provinces of Mexico. The spirit of revolt from the control of the central government has, heretofore, manifested itself in some of those provinces; and it is fair to infer that they would be inclined

to take the first favorable opportunity to proclaim their independence, and to form close alliances with Texas. The war would thus be endless; or, if cessations of hostilities should occur, they would only endure for a season. The interests of Mexico, therefore, could in nothing be better consulted than in a peace with her neighbors, which would result in the establishment of a permanent boundary. Upon the ratification of the treaty the Executive was prepared to treat with her on the most liberal basis. Hence the boundaries of Texas were left undefined by the treaty. The Executive proposed to settle these upon terms that all the world should have pronounced just and reasonable. No negotiation upon that point could have been undertaken between the United States and Mexico in advance of the ratification of the treaty. We should have had no right, no power, no authority, to have conducted such a negotiation; and to have undertaken it would have been an assumption equally revolting to the pride of Mexico and Texas, and subjecting us to the charge of arrogance; while to have proposed, in advance of annexation, to satisfy Mexico for any contingent interest she might have in Texas, would have been to have treated Texas, not as an independent power, but as a mere dependency of Mexico. This assumption could not have been acted on by the Executive without setting at defiance your own solemn declaration that that Republic was an independent State. Mexico had, it is true, threatened war against the United States, in the event the treaty of annexation was ratified. The Executive could not permit itself to be influenced by this threat. It represented, in this, the spirit of our people, who are ready to sacrifice much for peace, but nothing to intimidation. A war, under any circumstances, is greatly to be deplored, and the United States is the last nation to desire it; but if, as the condition of peace, it be required of us to forego the unquestionable right of treating with an independent power of our own continent upon matters highly interesting to both, and that upon a naked and unsustained pretension of claim by a third power, to control the free-will of the power with whom we treat—devoted as we may be to peace, and anxious to cultivate friendly relations with the whole world—the Executive does not hesitate to say that the people of the United States

would be ready to brave all consequences sooner than submit to such condition. But no apprehension of war was entertained by the Executive; and I must express frankly the opinion that, had the treaty been ratified by the Senate, it would have been followed by a prompt settlement, to the entire satisfaction of Mexico, of every matter in difference between the two countries. Seeing, then, that new preparations for hostile invasion of Texas were about to be adopted by Mexico, and that these were brought about because Texas had adopted the suggestions of the Executive upon the subject of annexation, it could not passively have folded its arms and permitted a war, threatened to be accompanied by every act that could mark a barbarous age, to be waged against her because she had done so.

Other considerations of a controlling character influenced the course of the Executive. The treaty which had thus been negotiated had failed to receive the ratification of the Senate. One of the chief objections which were urged against it was found to consist in the fact that the question of annexation had not been submitted to the ordeal of public opinion in the United States. However untenable such an objection was esteemed to be, in view of the unquestionable power of the Executive to negotiate the treaty, and the great and lasting interests involved in the question, I felt it to be my duty to submit the whole subject to Congress as the best expounders of popular sentiment. No definitive action having been taken on the subject by Congress, the question referred itself directly to the decision of the States and the people. The great popular election which has just terminated afforded the best opportunity of ascertaining the will of the States and the people upon it. Pending that issue, it became the imperative duty of the Executive to inform Mexico that the question of annexation was still before the American people, and that, until their decision was pronounced, any serious invasion of Texas would be regarded as an attempt to forestall their judgment, and could not be looked upon with indifference. I am most happy to inform you that no such invasion has taken place; and I trust that, whatever your action may be upon it, Mexico will see the importance of deciding the matter by a resort to peaceful

expedients, in preference to those of arms. The decision of the people and the States on this great and interesting subject has been decisively manifested. The question of annexation has been presented nakedly to their consideration. By the treaty itself all collateral and incidental issues, which were calculated to divide and distract the public councils, were carefully avoided. These were left to the wisdom of the future to determine. It presented, I repeat, the isolated question of annexation; and in that form it has been submitted to the ordeal of public sentiment. A controlling majority of the people, and a large majority of the States, have declared in favor of immediate annexation. Instructions have thus come up to both branches of Congress, from their respective constituents, in terms the most emphatic. It is the will of both the people and the States that Texas shall be annexed to the Union promptly and immediately. It may be hoped that, in carrying into execution the public will thus declared, all collateral issues may be avoided. Future Legislatures can best decide as to the number of States which should be formed out of the territory when the time has arrived for deciding that question. So with all others. By the treaty the United States assumed the payment of the debts of Texas, to an amount not exceeding ten millions of dollars, to be paid (with the exception of a sum falling short of four hundred thousand dollars) exclusively out of the proceeds of the sales of her public lands. We could not, with honor, take the lands without assuming the full payment of all incumbrances upon them.

Nothing has occurred since your last session to induce a doubt that the disposition of Texas remains unaltered. No intimation of an altered determination on the part of her government and people has been furnished to the Executive. She still desires to throw herself under the protection of our laws, and to partake of the blessings of our federative system; while every American interest would seem to require it. The extension of our coastwise and foreign trade to an amount almost incalculable; the enlargement of the market for our manufactures; a constantly growing market for our agricultural productions; safety to our frontiers, and additional strength and stability to the Union,—these are the results which

would rapidly develop themselves upon the consummation of the measure of annexation. In such event I will not doubt but that Mexico would find her true interest to consist in meeting the advances of this Government in a spirit of amity.

Nor do I apprehend any serious complaint from any other quarter; no sufficient ground exists for such complaint. We should interfere in no respect with the rights of any other nation. There can not be gathered from the act any design on our part to do so with their possessions on this continent. We have interposed no impediments in the way of such acquisitions of territory (large and extensive as many of them are) as the leading powers of Europe have made, from time to time, in every part of the world. We seek no conquest made by war. No intrigue will have been resorted to, or acts of diplomacy essayed, to accomplish the annexation of Texas. Free and independent herself, she asks to be received into our Union. It is a question for our own decision, whether she shall be received or not.

The two governments having already agreed, through their respective organs, on the terms of annexation, I would recommend their adoption by Congress in the form of a joint resolution or act, to be perfected and made binding on the two countries, when adopted in like manner by the government of Texas.

In order that the subject may be fully presented in all its bearings, the correspondence which has taken place in reference to it since the adjournment of Congress, between the United States, Texas, and Mexico, is herewith transmitted.

The amendments proposed by the Senate to the convention concluded between the United States and Mexico on the 20th of November, 1843, have been transmitted, through our minister, for the concurrence of the Mexican government; but, although urged thereto, no action has yet been had on the subject; nor has any answer been given which would authorize a favorable conclusion in the future.

The decree of September, 1843, in relation to the retail trade, the order for the expulsion of foreigners, and that of a more recent date in regard to passports—all of which are considered as in violation of the treaty of amity and commerce between the two countries—have led to a correspondence of

considerable length between the minister for foreign relations and our representative at Mexico, but without any satisfactory result. They remain still unadjusted; and many and serious inconveniences have already resulted to our citizens in consequence of them.

Questions growing out of the act of disarming a body of Texan troops, under the command of Major Snively, by an officer in the service of the United States, acting under the orders of our Government, and the forcible entry into the custom-house at Bryarly's Landing, on Red River, by certain citizens of the United States, and taking away therefrom the goods seized by the collector of the customs as forfeited under the laws of Texas, have been adjusted so far as the powers of the Executive extend. The correspondence between the two governments, in reference to both subjects, will be found among the accompanying documents. It contains a full statement of all the facts and circumstances, with the views taken on both sides, and the principles on which the questions have been adjusted. It remains for Congress to make the necessary appropriation to carry the arrangement into effect, which I respectfully recommend.

The greatly improved condition of the Treasury affords a subject for general congratulation. The paralysis which had fallen on trade and commerce, and which subjected the Government to the necessity of resorting to loans, and the issue of treasury-notes to a large amount, has passed away; and after the payment of upward of seven millions of dollars on account of the interest, and in redemption of more than five millions of dollars of the public debt, which falls due on the 1st of January next, and setting apart upward of two millions of dollars for the payment of outstanding treasury-notes, and meeting an installment of the debts of the corporate cities of the District of Columbia, an estimated surplus of upward of seven millions of dollars, over and above the existing appropriations, will remain in the treasury at the close of the fiscal year. Should the treasury-notes continue outstanding, as heretofore, that surplus will be considerably augmented. Although all interest has ceased upon them, and the Government has invited their return to the treasury, yet they remain outstanding; affording

great facilities to commerce, and establishing the fact that under a well-regulated system of finance the Government has resources within itself which render it independent in time of need, not only of private loans, but also of bank facilities.

The only remaining subject of regret is, that the remaining stocks of the Government do not fall due at an earlier day; since their redemption would be entirely within its control. As it is, it may be well worthy the consideration of Congress, whether the law establishing the sinking fund (under the operation of which the debts of the Revolution and the last war with Great Britain were to a great extent extinguished) should not, with proper modifications, so as to prevent an accumulation of surpluses, and limited in amount to a specific sum, be re-enacted. Such provision, which would authorize the Government to go into the market for a purchase of its own stock on fair terms, would serve to maintain its credit at the highest point, and prevent, to a great extent, those fluctuations in the price of its securities, which might, under circumstances, affect its credit. No apprehension of this sort is at this moment entertained, since the stocks of the Government, which but two years ago were offered for sale to capitalists at home and abroad at a depreciation and could find no purchasers, are now greatly above par in the hands of the holders; but a wise and prudent forecast admonishes us to place beyond the reach of contingency the public credit.

It must also be a matter of unmingled gratification that, under the existing financial system (resting upon the act of 1789, and the resolution of 1816), the currency of the country has attained a state of perfect soundness; and the rates of exchange between different parts of the Union, which, in 1841, denoted, by their enormous amount, the great depreciation, and, in fact, worthlessness of the currency in most of the States, are now reduced to little more than the mere expense of transporting specie from place to place, and the risk incidental to the operation. In a new country like that of the United States, where so many inducements are held out for speculation, the depositories of the surplus revenue, consisting of banks of any description, when it reaches any considerable amount, require the closest vigilance on the part of the Gov-

ernment. All banking institutions, under whatever denomination they may pass, are governed by an almost exclusive regard to the interest of the stockholders. That interest consists in the augmentation of profits in the form of dividends; and a large surplus revenue, intrusted to their custody, is but too apt to lead to excessive loans, and to extravagantly large issues of paper. As a necessary consequence, prices are nominally increased, and the speculative mania very soon seizes upon the public mind. A fictitious state of prosperity for a season exists, and, in the language of the day, money becomes plenty. Contracts are entered into by individuals, resting on this unsubstantial state of things; but the delusion speedily passes away, and the country is overrun with an indebtedness so weighty as to overwhelm many, and to visit every department of industry with great and ruinous embarrassment. The greatest vigilance becomes necessary on the part of the Government to guard against this state of things. The depositories must be given distinctly to understand that the favors of the Government will be altogether withdrawn, or substantially diminished, if its revenues shall be regarded as additions to their banking capital, or as the foundations of an enlarged circulation. The Government, through its revenue, has at all times an important part to perform in connection with the currency; and it greatly depends upon its vigilance and care whether the country be involved in embarrassments similar to those which it has had recently to encounter, or, aided by the action of the Treasury, shall be preserved in a sound and healthy condition.

The dangers to be guarded against are greatly augmented by too large a surplus of revenue. When that surplus greatly exceeds in amount what shall be acquired by a wise and prudent forecast to meet unforeseen contingencies, the Legislature itself may come to be seized with a disposition to indulge in extravagant appropriations to objects, many of which may, and most probably would, be found to conflict with the Constitution. A fancied expediency is elevated above Constitutional authority; and a reckless and wasteful extravagance but too certainly follow. This important power of taxation, which, when exercised in its most restricted form, is a burden on labor

and production, is resorted to, under various pretexts, for purposes having no affinity to the motives which dictated its grant; and the extravagance of Government stimulates individual extravagance, until the spirit of a wild and ill-regulated speculation involves one and all in its unfortunate results. In view of such fatal consequences, it may be laid down as an axiom, founded in moral and political truth, that no greater taxes should be imposed than are necessary for an economical administration of the Government; and that whatever exists beyond should be reduced or modified. This doctrine does in no way conflict with the exercise of a sound discrimination in the selection of the articles to be taxed, which a due regard to the public weal would at all times suggest to the legislative mind. It leaves the range of selection undefined; and such selection should always be made with an eye to the great interests of the country. Composed, as is the Union, of separate and independent States, a patriotic Legislature will not fail, in consulting the interests of the parts, to adopt such a course as will be best calculated to advance the harmony of the whole; and thus insure that permanency in the policy of the Government, without which all efforts to advance the public prosperity are vain and fruitless. This great and vitally important task rests with Congress; and the Executive can do no more than recommend the general principles which should govern in its execution.

I refer you to the Report of the Secretary of War for an exhibition of the condition of the army; and recommend to you, as well worthy your best consideration, many of the suggestions it contains. The Secretary in no degree exaggerates the great importance of pressing forward, without delay, in the work of erecting and finishing the fortifications to which he particularly alludes. Much has been done toward placing our cities and roadsteads in a state of security against the hazards of hostile attack, within the last four years; but, considering the new elements which have been of late years employed in the propelling of ships, and the formidable implements of destruction which have been brought into service, we can not be too active or vigilant in preparing and perfecting the means of defense. I refer you, also, to his report for a full statement of the condition of the Indian tribes within

our jurisdiction. The Executive has abated no effort in carrying into effect the well-established policy of the Government, which contemplates a removal of all the tribes residing within the limits of the several States, beyond those limits; and it is now enabled to congratulate the country at the prospect of an early consummation of this object. Many of the tribes have already made great progress in the arts of civilized life; and, through the operation of the schools established among them, aided by the efforts of the pious men of various religious denominations who devote themselves to the task of their improvement, we may fondly hope that the remains of the formidable tribes, which were once masters of this country, will, in their transition from the savage state to a condition of refinement and cultivation, add another bright trophy to adorn the labors of a well-directed philanthropy.

The accompanying report of the Secretary of the Navy will explain to you the situation of that branch of the service. The present organization of the Department imparts to its operations great efficiency; but I concur fully in the propriety of a division of the bureau of construction, equipment, increase, and repairs, into two bureaus. The subjects, as now arranged, are incongruous, and require, to a certain extent, information and qualifications altogether dissimilar.

The operations of the squadron on the coast of Africa have been conducted with all due attention to the object which led to its organization; and I am happy to say that the officers and crews have enjoyed the best possible health under the system adopted by the officer in command. It is believed that the United States is the only nation which has by its laws subjected to the punishment of death as pirates those who may be engaged in the slave-trade. A similar enactment on the part of other nations would not fail to be attended by beneficial results.

In consequence of the difficulties which have existed in the way of securing titles for the necessary grounds, operations have not yet been commenced toward the establishment of the navy-yard at Memphis. So soon as the title is perfected, no further delay will be permitted to intervene. It is well worthy of your consideration whether Congress should not direct the

establishment of a ropewalk in connection with the contemplated navy-yard, as a measure, not only of economy, but as highly useful and necessary. The only establishment of the sort now connected with the service is located at Boston; and the advantages of a similar establishment, convenient to the hemp-growing region, must be apparent to all.

The report of the Secretary presents other matters to your consideration of an important character in connection with the service.

In referring you to the accompanying report of the Postmaster-General, it affords me continued cause of gratification to be able to advert to the fact that the affairs of the Department for the last four years have been so conducted as, from its unaided resources, to meet its large expenditures. On my coming into office a debt of nearly five hundred thousand dollars existed against the Department, which Congress discharged by an appropriation from the treasury. The Department, on the 4th of March next, will be found, under the management of its present efficient head, free of debt or embarrassment, which could only have been done by the observance and practice of the greatest vigilance and economy. The laws have contemplated throughout that the Department should be self-sustaining; but it may become necessary, with the wisest regard to the public interests, to introduce amendments and alterations in the system. There is a strong desire manifested in many quarters so to alter the tariff of letter-postage as to reduce the amount of tax at present imposed. Should such a measure be carried into effect to the full extent desired, it can not well be doubted but that, for the first years of its operation, a diminished revenue would be collected, the supply of which would necessarily constitute a charge upon the treasury. Whether such a result would be desirable it will be for Congress, in its wisdom, to determine. It may in general be asserted as true that radical alterations in any system should rather be brought about gradually than by sudden changes; and by pursuing this prudent policy in the reduction of letter-postage the Department might still sustain itself through the revenue which would accrue by the increase of letters. The state and condition of the public treasury have heretofore been such as to have

precluded the recommendation of any material change. The difficulties upon this head have, however, ceased, and a larger discretion is now left to the Government.

I can not too strongly urge the policy of authorizing the establishment of a line of steamships regularly to ply between this country and foreign ports, and upon our own waters, for the transportation of the mail. The example of the British government is well worthy of imitation in this respect. The belief is strongly entertained that the emoluments arising from the transportation of mail-matter to foreign countries would operate of itself as an inducement to cause individual enterprise to undertake that branch of the task; and the remuneration of the Government would consist in the addition readily made to our steam-navy in case of emergency by the ships so employed. Should this suggestion meet your approval, the propriety of placing such ships under the command of experienced officers of the navy will not escape your observation. The application of steam to the purposes of naval warfare cogently recommends an extensive steam-marine as important in estimating the defenses of the country. Fortunately this may be obtained by us, to a great extent, without incurring any large amount of expenditure. Steam-vessels, to be engaged in the transportation of the mails on our principal water-courses, lakes, and parts of our coast, could also be so constructed as to be efficient as war-vessels when needed; and would of themselves constitute a formidable force in order to repel attacks from abroad. We can not be blind to the fact that other nations have already added large numbers of steamships to their naval armaments, and that this new and powerful agent is destined to revolutionize the condition of the world. It becomes the United States, therefore, looking to their security, to adopt a similar policy; and the plan suggested will enable them to do so at a small comparative cost.

I take the greatest pleasure in bearing testimony to the zeal and untiring industry which have characterized the conduct of the members of the Executive Cabinet. Each, in his appropriate sphere, has rendered me the most efficient aid in carrying on the Government; and it will not, I trust, appear out of place for me to bear this public testimony. The cardinal

objects which should ever be held in view by those intrusted with the administration of public affairs are rigidly, and without favor or affection, so to interpret the national will, expressed in the laws, as that injustice should be done to none—justice to all. This has been the rule upon which they have acted; and thus it is believed that few cases (if any) exist wherein our fellow-citizens, who from time to time have been drawn to the seat of Government for the settlement of their transactions with the Government, have gone away dissatisfied. Where the testimony has been perfected and was esteemed satisfactory, their claims have been promptly audited; and this in the absence of all favoritism or partiality. The government which is not just to its own people can neither claim their affection nor the respect of the world. At the same time the closest attention has been paid to those matters which relate more immediately to the great concerns of the country. Order and efficiency in each branch of the public service have prevailed, accompanied by a system of the most rigid responsibility on the part of the receiving and disbursing agents. The fact, in illustration of the truth of this remark, deserves to be noticed, that the revenues of the Government, amounting in the last four years to upward of one hundred and twenty millions of dollars, have been collected and disbursed through the numerous governmental agents without the loss by default of any amount worthy of serious commentary.

The appropriations made by Congress for the improvement of the rivers of the West, and of the harbors of the lakes, are in a course of judicious expenditure under suitable agents; and are destined, it is to be hoped, to realize all the benefits designed to be accomplished by Congress. I can not, however, sufficiently impress upon Congress the great importance of withholding appropriations from improvements which are not ascertained, by previous examination and survey, to be necessary for the shelter and protection of trade from the dangers of storms and tempests. Without this precaution the expenditures are but too apt to inure to the benefit of individuals, without reference to the only consideration which can render them Constitutional—the public interests and the general good.

I can not too earnestly urge upon you the interests of this district, over which, by the Constitution, Congress has exclusive jurisdiction. It would be deeply to be regretted should there be at any time ground to complain of neglect on the part of a community which, detached as it is from the parental care of the States of Virginia and Maryland, can only expect aid from Congress as its local Legislature. Among the subjects which claim your attention is the prompt organization of an asylum for the insane who may be found from time to time sojourning within the District. Such course is also demanded by considerations which apply to branches of the public service. For the necessities in this behalf I invite your particular attention to the report of the Secretary of the Navy.

I have thus, gentlemen of the two Houses of Congress, presented you a true and faithful picture of the condition of public affairs, both foreign and domestic. The wants of the public service are made known to you; and matters of no ordinary importance are urged upon your consideration. Shall I not be permitted to congratulate you on the happy auspices under which you have assembled, and at the important change in the condition of things which has occurred in the last three years? During that period questions with foreign powers, of vital importance to the peace of our country, have been settled and adjusted. A desolating and wasting war with savage tribes has been brought to a close. The internal tranquillity of the country, threatened by agitating questions, has been preserved. The credit of the Government, which had experienced a temporary embarrassment, has been thoroughly restored. Its coffers, which, for a season, were empty, have been replenished. A currency, nearly uniform in its value, has taken the place of one depreciated and almost worthless. Commerce and manufactures, which had suffered in common with every other interest, have once more revived; and the whole country exhibits an aspect of prosperity and happiness. Trade and barter, no longer governed by a wild and speculative mania, rest upon a solid and substantial footing; and the rapid growth of our cities in every direction bespeaks most strongly the favorable circumstances by which we are surrounded. My happiness, in the retirement which shortly awaits me, is the ardent hope

which I experience that this state of prosperity is neither deceptive nor destined to be short-lived; and that measures which have not yet received its sanction, but which I can not but regard as closely connected with the honor, the glory, and still more enlarged prosperity of the country, are destined, at an early day, to receive the approval of Congress. Under these circumstances, and with these anticipations, I shall most gladly leave to others, more able than myself, the noble and pleasing task of sustaining the public prosperity. I shall carry with me into retirement the gratifying reflection that, as my sole object throughout has been to advance the public good, I may not entirely have failed in accomplishing it; and this gratification is heightened in no small degree by the fact that when, under a deep and abiding sense of duty, I have found myself constrained to resort to the qualified veto, it has neither been followed by disapproval on the part of the people, nor weakened in any degree their attachment to the great conservative feature of our Government.

Among the commendable features of this message is its brevity, a characteristic of all Mr. Tyler's public documents, and a quality unfortunately unknown to some of his predecessors and most of those who have followed him in the Presidency. The message makes a last appeal to the calm good sense of the people for the preservation of the Union, while its author laments that even with all precautions the day of evil counsels and dissolution was not one of the improbabilities of the future. The conduct of a portion of his own section pending the recent Texas negotiation, and of individuals and societies in other parts of the Nation, with all of which Mr. Tyler not only had no sympathy, and which he deeply deplored, may well have justified him in warning the country of its danger. He had taken the side of the Nulli-

fiers, in a degree, in 1832, but not so much for their cause as the mode by which the Administration undertook to bring them to obedience. Although Mr. Tyler does not lose this last opportunity to set forth the theory of his school that the State well guarded in the Union is the true safeguard of the Union, and that in the federative system is the highest blessing to be derived to the country, he never was, not even at the last, in any sense, a "fire-eater," a disunionist. His State-Rights principles, the most firm and uncompromising, meant something quite different from disunion.

The President again brings forward the Texas question with great spirit. This was the leading theme of the message, as it now was of Mr. Tyler's term of office. He expected little from Congress on his account. He hoped now that the tolerably certain voice of the people in the last election would have its weight with that body. And although he had lost the influence he had with Congress at the outset, his courage never forsook him, and what he believed to be right he pressed forward without reference to the result. Of the Whigs he expected nothing, and although he was forced to receive all possible help from the Democrats, they barely tolerated anything from him, and between them he was simply able to eke out an existence at the White House. This all made him independent in his acts, while it gave a severity and stubbornness to the tone of his messages at times which was by no means conducive to harmony.

The territory on the Columbia River now demanded the immediate attention of Congress, and on the 16th of December a bill was brought before the House for establishing a territorial government for Oregon. This bill was designed to cover the territory between the 42° and 54° 40' of northern latitude. A long and full discussion of the Oregon question followed, covering the grounds of the claim of the United States to all of that territory. It was well known in Congress that negotiations under the direction of President Tyler were then in process, by which it was hoped the Oregon boundary affair would be settled satisfactorily; hence many members considered the bill unadvisable at the time, if not prejudicial to the negotiations. The bill, amended to exclude slavery, finally passed the House, but was not taken up in the Senate.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TEXAS AND OREGON—WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
WAR WITH MEXICO?—END OF MR. TYLER'S
ADMINISTRATION.

THE absorbing subject of the session was that in relation to the annexation of Texas. Soon after the opening of Congress the question was taken up, and from the various resolutions and amendments in the House a proposition, finally passed by a vote of one hundred and twenty to ninety-eight, was sent to the Senate. Here, again, the great contest was fought by a very fine array of talent.

The session was drawing to a close, and the public anxiety was raised to the highest pitch. According to the claimed boundary of Texas, a part of its vast territory, which was limited in the House resolutions to the formation of four States, extended north of the Missouri Compromise line. The right of Congress to legislate on slavery in the Territories came distinctly forward, and in the passage of the measure in the House were somewhat strikingly mingled Democrats and Whigs of the slave and free sections. By the Missouri Compromise any State formed out of that part of Texas north of $36^{\circ} 30'$ could never become slave whether the people desired it or not. Congress was now actually using the power of making

even the discussion of the subject in such territory of no effect. In the House it was said that of the one hundred and twenty who voted for the measure, one hundred and twelve were Democrats, fifty-three from Free and fifty-nine from Slave States, and the others were Slave-State Whigs. Of the ninety-eight negative votes, twenty-eight were Free-State Democrats and seventy were Whigs, fifty-two from Free and eighteen from Slave States. It was finally found that the resolutions, as they came from the House, could not be passed in the Senate. Mr. Benton had proposed an amendment to the House resolutions including the idea of negotiation, and to this some Senators unflinchingly held. Robert J. Walker now proposed that Mr. Benton's resolution should be incorporated with the House bill. The following is the resolution added providing for negotiation, and not war, in the acquisition of Texas :—

“That a State, to be formed out of the present Republic of Texas, with suitable extent and boundaries, and with two Representatives in Congress, until the next apportionment of representation, shall be admitted into the Union by virtue of this act, on an equal footing with the existing States, as soon as the terms and conditions of such admission, and the cession of the remaining Texan territory to the United States, shall be agreed upon by the government of Texas and the United States.

“SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That the sum of one hundred thousand dollars be, and the same is hereby, appropriated to defray the expenses of missions and negotiations to agree upon the terms of said admission and

cession, either by treaty, to be submitted to the Senate, or by articles to be submitted to the two Houses of Congress, as the President may direct."

Mr. Polk was now in Washington and consulted at every step, and in the full understanding that he, and not Mr. Tyler, was to carry out the measures of the bill, and that he favored the negotiation plan, it was combined with the House resolutions, and the whole bill passed on the evening of the 27th of February by a vote of twenty-seven to twenty-five, every Senator being present. The bill then went to the House, and the amendment was concurred in on the following day. On the first day of March the President signed it, and the measure was a law. The next day was Sunday. On Monday it was found that President Tyler had actually dispatched a messenger on his way to Texas, having rejected the Senate amendment, and, as it was erroneously supposed, of his own pleasure, seized the part of the resolutions providing for immediate annexation, and hence war with Mexico. Mr. Benton makes the following showing of this whole affair:—

"It was then seen that some Senators had been cheated out of their votes, and that the passage of the act through the Senate had been procured by a fraud. At least five of the Senators who voted affirmatively would have voted against the resolutions of the House, if Mr. Benton's bill had not been added, and if it had not been believed that the execution of the act would be left to the new President, and that he would adopt Mr. Benton's. The possibility of a contrary course had been considered, and, as it was believed, fully guarded against. Several Senators and some citizens conversed with Mr. Polk, then in the city, and received his assurance that he would act on

Mr. Benton's proposition, and in carrying it into effect, would nominate for the negotiation a national commission, composed of safe and able men of both parties, such as Mr. Benton had suggested. . . .

"Mr. Francis P. Blair, in a letter addressed to Mr. Tappan, and conversing with Mr. Polk at a different time, gives his statement to the same effect:—

"When the resolution passed by the House of Representatives for the annexation of Texas reached the Senate it was ascertained that it would fail in that body. Benton, Bagby, Dix, Haywood, and as I understood, you also, were opposed to this naked proposition of annexation, which necessarily brought with it the war in which Texas was engaged with Mexico. All had determined to adhere to the bill submitted by Colonel Benton, for the appointment of a commission to arrange the terms of annexation with Texas, and to make the attempt to render its accession to our Union as palatable as possible to Mexico before its consummation. It was hoped that this point might be effected by giving (as has been done in the late treaty of peace) a pecuniary consideration, fully equivalent in value for the territory desired by the United States, and to which Texas could justly assert any title. The Senate had been polled, and it was ascertained that any two of the Democratic Senators who were opposed to Brown's resolution, which had passed the House, could defeat it—the whole Whig party preferring annexation by negotiation, upon Colonel Benton's plan to that of Brown. While the question was thus pending I met Mr. Brown (late Governor of Tennessee, then a member of the House), who suggested that the resolution of the House, and the bill of Colonel Benton, preferred by the Senate, might be blended, making the latter an alternative, and leaving the President elect (who alone would have time to consummate the measure), to act under one or the other at his discretion. I told Mr. Brown that I did not believe that the Democratic Senators opposed to the resolution of the House, and who had its fate in their hands, would consent to this arrangement, unless they were satisfied in advance by Mr. Polk that the commission and negotiation contemplated in Colonel Benton's plan would be tried before that of direct legislative annexation

was resorted to. He desired me to see Colonel Benton and the friends of his proposition, submit the suggestions he had made, and then confer with Mr. Polk to know whether he would meet their views. I complied; and after several interviews with Messrs. Haywood, Dix, Benton, and others (Mr. Allen, of Ohio, using his influence in the same direction), finding that the two plans could be coupled and carried, if it were understood that the pacific project was first to be tried, I consulted the President elect on the subject. In the conference I had with him, he gave me full assurance that he would appoint a commission, as contemplated in the bill prepared by Colonel Benton, if passed in conjunction with the House resolution as an alternative. In the course of my conversation with Mr. Polk, I told him that the friends of this plan were solicitous that the commission should be filled by distinguished men of both parties, and that Colonel Benton had mentioned to me the names of Crittenden and Wright as of the class from which it should be formed. Mr. Polk responded by declaring with an emphasis, "that the first men of the country should fill the commission." I communicated the result of this interview to Messrs. Benton, Dix, Haywood, etc. The two last met, on appointment, to adopt the phraseology of Benton's bill, to suit as an alternative for the resolution of the House, and it was passed after a very general understanding of the course which the measure was to take. Both Messrs. Dix and Haywood told me they had interviews with Mr. Polk on the subject of the communication I had reported to them from him, and they were confirmed by his immediate assurance in pursuing the course which they had resolved on in consequence of my representation of his purpose in regard to the point on which their action depended. After the law was passed, and Mr. Polk inaugurated, he applied to General Dix (as I am informed by the latter), to urge the Senate to act upon one of the suspended Cabinet appointments, saying that he wished his Administration organized immediately, as he intended the instant recall of the messenger understood to have been dispatched by Mr. Tyler, and to revoke his orders given in the last moments of his power, to thwart the design of Congress in affording him (Mr. Polk) the means of instituting a negotiation, with a view of bringing Texas peaceably into the Union.'

"All this was perfectly satisfactory with respect to the President elect; but there might be some danger from the actual President, or rather, from Mr. Calhoun, his Secretary of State, who had over Mr. Tyler that ascendant which it is the prerogative of genius to exercise over inferior minds. This danger was suggested in debate in open Senate. It was repulsed as an impossible infamy. Such a cheat upon Senators, and such an encroachment upon the rights of the new President were accounted among the impossibilities; and Mr. McDuffie, a close and generous friend of Mr. Calhoun, speaking for the Administration, and replying to the suggestion that they might seize upon the act, and execute it without regard to the Senate's amendment, not only denied it for them, but repulsed it in terms which implied criminality if they did. He said they would not have the 'audacity' to do it. Mr. McDuffie was an honorable man, standing close to Mr. Calhoun; and although he did not assume to speak by authority, yet his indignant repulse of the suggestion was entirely satisfactory, and left the misgiving Senators released from apprehension on account of Mr. Tyler's possible conduct. Mr. Robert J. Walker also, who had moved the conjunction of the two measures, and who was confidential both with the coming in and going out President, assisted in allaying apprehension in the reason he gave for opposing an amendment offered by Mr. Ephraim H. Foster, of Tennessee, which, looking to the President's adoption of the negotiating clause, required that he should make a certain 'stipulation' in relation to slavery, and another in relation to the public debt. Mr. Walker objected to this proposition, saying it was already in the bill, 'and if the President proceeded properly in the negotiation he would act upon it.' This seemed to be authoritative that negotiation was to be the mode, and consequently that Mr. Benton's plan was to be adopted. Thus quieted in their apprehensions, five Senators voted for the act of admission, who would not otherwise have done so; and any two of whom voting against it would have defeated it. Mr. Polk did not dispatch a messenger to recall Mr. Tyler's envoy; and that omission was the only point of complaint against him. Mr. McDuffie stood exempt from all blame, known to be an honorable man speaking from generous impulsions.

“Thus was Texas incorporated into the Union—by a deception, and by deluding five Senators out of their votes. It was not a barren fraud, but one prolific of evil, and pregnant with bloody fruit. It established, so far as the United States was concerned, the state of war with Mexico. It only wanted the acceptance of Texas to make war the complete legal condition of the two countries; and that temptation to Texas was too great to be resisted. She desired annexation any way; and the Government of the United States having broken up the armistice, and thwarted the peace prospects, and brought upon her the danger of a new invasion, she leaped at the chance of throwing the burden of the war on the United States. The legislative proposition sent by Mr. Tyler was accepted; Texas became incorporated with the United States.”

According to Mr. Blair's letter, Mr. Polk stood fully committed to the appointment of a commission, to make an effort to negotiate a settlement of the Texas question, was indeed anxious to enter upon the business; and this view of the case was perfectly satisfactory to Mr. Benton and other Democrats of the opposition, placing the incoming Administration on amicable terms with them. But they soon discovered that there was an error some place, and when President Polk delivered his first message in December they saw, if they did not before, that Mr. Tyler's action on the last day of his term was no trick of his and his Cabinet's, as that message says:—

“In pursuance of the joint resolution of Congress, ‘for annexing Texas to the United States,’ my predecessor, on the third day of March, 1845, elected to submit the first and second sections of that resolution to the Republic of Texas, as an overture, on the part of the United States, for her admission as a State into our Union. This election I approved, and accordingly the *chargé d'affaires* of

the United States in Texas, under instructions of the 10th of March, 1845, presented these sections of the resolution for the acceptance of that Republic."

Thus it appears clear that Mr. Benton was mistaken, as other vilifiers of President Tyler were on many occasions. Mr. Tyler only carried out the desire of his successor in taking advantage of the choice of a course of action on the measure to admit Texas. He may have preferred that course himself, but there is no evidence to prove that he would not have left the whole matter to be carried out by Mr. Polk, who was as intent upon annexation as himself. Mr. Polk desired the question to be settled before he came into office. He was willing to face the war with Mexico, or, like Mr. Calhoun, believed that Mexico would not undertake war with the United States, no matter how Texas might be wrested from her, or made a part of the United States.

At this session of Congress an act was passed to establish the same day for holding the Presidential election in all the States. By this act the election has since been held on the Tuesday next after the first Monday of November. Other measures which received the sanction of the President at this session were provisions for the establishment of mails with foreign countries; granting lands to Indiana for internal improvements; and for the building of roads in Wisconsin.

A bill forbidding the President to build revenue-cutters at his discretion was vetoed by Mr. Tyler, but was then taken up and passed by more than a

two-thirds vote. A bill making appropriations for the improvement of certain rivers and harbors was retained by Mr. Tyler, and thus he closed his Administration with a "pocket veto."

At last, after a long, direct struggle under Mr. Tyler and his predecessor, and years of quiet effort under other Administrations, Texas had become a part of the Federal Union, on conditions which were not satisfactory even to many of the friends of annexation. For Mexico there can be little sympathy, hardly more than mere justice, in the consideration of this affair. Under Spain, for three hundred years, civilization and government were scandals on mankind. And since the establishment of the Republic in 1824, it had been the seat of revolution and anarchy. In the formation of the government of the Mexican United States in 1824, Texas was one of the States, with her western boundary in the Nueces River. This river, Coahuila, and New Mexico remained her western border until 1835, when she claimed the Rio Grande as the western boundary, as being a more secure line of demarkation from an anarchic country, and in 1836 Santa Anna acknowledged this boundary, but his action was never sanctioned by the Mexican government. So at the time of her reception as a part of the United States the territory between the Nueces and the Rio Grande was, at best, only a disputed portion of Texas. Soon after the formation of the Republic of Mexico, Texas was united with Coahuila by act of the general government, as it was believed

that they were too weak to perform the functions of States alone. This State of Texas and Coahuila remained in force until 1833, when Texas proceeded to separate herself from Coahuila. But in the previous year her people had taken up arms to resist the monarchy then declared over them. After several years of destructive war, delegates of the people of Texas met at Austin, November 3, 1835, organized a form of independent government, and provided for the meeting of a Constitutional Convention in March, 1836. On the 21st of April, at San Jacinto, the Texans, under Sam Houston, defeated and captured Santa Anna. This, to a great extent, ended the brutal war that had been waged by Mexico, and the United States and several European powers acknowledged the independence of the "Lone Star." In December, 1836, at the first session of the Texan Congress, the authority of that country was declared to extend to the Rio Grande.

In the September elections the people of Texas decided in favor of annexation to the United States, and an agent was sent to Washington City to bring about this result, which, however, did not meet the approval of General Jackson, as much as he desired the possession of Texas. Although favoring the annexation, if it could be effected peaceably, Mr. Van Buren pursued the course of his patron and predecessor. In July, 1842, Mr. Webster, then Secretary of State, said :—

"Mexico may have chosen to consider, and may still choose to consider, Texas as having been at all times since

1835, and as still continuing a rebellious province; but the world has been obliged to take a very different view of the matter. From the time of the battle of San Jacinto, in April, 1836, to the present moment, Texas has exhibited the same external signs of national independence as Mexico herself, and with quite as much stability of government. Politically free and independent, acknowledged as a political sovereignty by the principal powers of the world, no hostile foot finding rest within her territory for six or seven years, and Mexico herself refraining for all that period from any further attempt to re-establish her own authority over that territory, it can not but be surprising to find Mr. De Bocanegra (the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico) complaining that, for that whole period, citizens of the United States or its Government have been favoring the rebels of Texas, and supplying them with vessels, ammunition, and money, as if the war for the reduction of the province of Texas had been constantly prosecuted by Mexico, and her success prevented by these influences from abroad."

But Mr. Webster was opposed to the annexation of Texas, even under the wise and cautious conditions sanctioned by Mr. Clay and Martin Van Buren. In 1825 and 1827 Mr. Adams had instructed Joel R. Poinsett, Minister to Mexico, to negotiate to purchase Texas to the Rio Grande. Mr. Adams was desirous to add Texas to this country by fair negotiation because he had conducted the treaty with Spain in 1819, which had yielded this territory, or the greater part of it, to that power, it having been held without much vigor as a part of the United States by the purchase of 1803. He had surrendered this claim in the Treaty of Florida contrary to his judgment and will, and had ever since borne

the blame of an injury to the South, which was inflicted by Mr. Monroe and her own representatives. So desirous was Mr. Adams for the restoration of this claimed territory, that Mr. Poinsett was instructed to negotiate for the country east of the Brazos, if he could not reach the Colorado, Nueces, or Rio Grande. There became, at a later date, a more important reason for the acquisition of this country beyond its merely sectional one of preserving the balance between the Slave and Free States. This was the fact that the great part, and only really valuable part, of its population was made up of people from the United States.

In 1820 Moses Austin, of New England, having made his way to Texas, in January, 1821, obtained permission to settle a colony of Louisianians in Texas, under a most favorable grant of land. The main conditions imposed upon him by the Spanish government were that his colonists should be from Louisiana only, and should be Roman Catholics. Austin died suddenly before being able to see his grand colonization scheme taking shape. But among his last words he strongly urged his sons to carry out his contract with New Spain. Stephen F. Austin went on, and, deciding on the location for his settlement, returned to Louisiana, and published his purposes. In December, 1821, the first of his colonists reached the Brazos. The Spanish authorities were so well disposed toward the plan of settlement, and placed such little value on their vast territory, that it was agreed that each head of a family should be

entitled to six hundred and forty acres of land, the wife three hundred and twenty acres, each child one hundred and sixty, and eighty acres were to be added to the family for each slave. Baron de Bastrop was for a time appointed by the Spanish government to regulate and grant titles to the American colonists. The great fortune of Austin soon became common talk throughout this country, and other enterprising men from various parts of the United States visited Texas. Among these was the notorious General James Wilkinson. In 1823 Mexico passed a general colonization law, still maintaining the religious or churchly requirement of the original permit to Austin. But to this feature of the case, considered of such vital importance by Mexico, little heed was really ever given. Under the Republic slavery was abolished. But the Southern emigrants paid no respect to this. They still brought their slaves, as their servants. In 1830, however, the Mexican Congress passed a law to stop all emigration from the United States. This the colonists resisted, Texas resisted, and this and other restrictions and constant land conflicts finally led to war.

The American population then predominated, and at the opening of negotiations for annexation under President Tyler a very great part of Texas had no Spanish citizens. The Texan war was prosecuted mainly by former citizens of the United States, and a very general sympathy was entertained for the success of Texas. Hundreds of sympathizers and adventurers, indeed, rushed to the seat of war to

share in the contest. The manner in which Mexico conducted this war against Texas was offensive to this country. Then, too, she had another very good reason for ill-feeling towards Mexico. During her revolutions Mexico paid little respect to the rights or property of the United States. Through the leniency of this Government, and its anxiety to see Mexico firmly and peaceably fixed as a republic, mere expostulations were the only means used to prevent the depredations on American citizens and commerce. In 1839 Mr. Van Buren succeeded in inducing the Mexican authorities to enter upon a settlement of these claims. Commissioners were sent from the United States, but they had only succeeded in adjusting a part of the claims when their commissions expired in 1842. The main part of this acknowledged debt Mexico owed the United States when we assumed the debts of Texas to risk a war in which this Government became responsible to its own citizens for this debt growing out of Mexican depredations.

As Mr. Polk made the race for the Presidency on the promise to favor immediate and unconditional annexation, and the bill for annexation was passed with the understanding that he would favor negotiation, and when he had the choice of negotiation, or annexation and war without negotiation, he authorized Mr. Tyler to prefer the latter. In subsequent debates on the state of war Mr. Benton persisted in fixing all the blame of the war on Mr. Calhoun. Mr. Benton greatly underestimated the ability of

President Tyler and his power in the affairs of his Cabinet, and was largely inclined to place in an unfavorable light most of the acts he did attribute to Mr. Tyler. He went far back of Mr. Tyler's Administration to find the responsibility of Mr. Calhoun.

In his annual message December, 1842, President Tyler said: "The United States have always contended that their rights appertained to the whole region of country lying on the Pacific, and embraced within 42° and $54^{\circ} 40'$ of north latitude." Whereupon a British writer breaks out in this language:—

"Commentary on so false and monstrous an assertion as this is thoroughly useless. If concession be made to this claim, they will, by and by, claim as far as the pole. In a word, nothing will satisfy them short of the extinction of British power and influence throughout the northern continent of America. And it only remains for the British government and the British people to consider whether they will tolerate this."

Soon after closing the treaty of Washington, by the authority of President Tyler negotiations were begun with a view of settling this north-western boundary. But nothing of importance took place. In fact, the matter was allowed to rest until 1844. In the meantime, however, the President had urged upon Congress repeatedly the necessity of protecting and fostering emigration to Oregon.

On the 24th of February, 1844, Richard Pakenham, the new Minister from England, renewed the former proposition to settle the Oregon boundary,

Mr. Upshur at once began the steps to negotiation. His death stopped further proceedings until in August, when, by invitation from the British Minister, Mr. Calhoun took up the subject. Mr. Calhoun, strangely enough, at once proposed a settlement by extending the 49° of north latitude from the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific. This closed the negotiations for the time. But the Administration withdrew the proposition of 49°, and the Presidential campaign was fought by the Democrats on the ground of "all of Oregon or nothing." In this condition of affairs President Tyler's term of office closed.

CHAPTER XIX.

LEAVING THE WHITE HOUSE—AFTER THE PRESIDENCY—
THE PEACE CONFERENCE—THE CONFEDERACY—
THE GRAVE.

ON the 4th of March, from Willard's, then Fuller's, Hotel, Mr. Tyler joined President Polk, and accompanied him to the Capitol in the ceremonies of the inauguration, and on the evening of the following day started with his family to his home in Virginia. The following letters from "Letters and Times of the Tylers" will show with sufficient warmth the manner in which President Tyler and his family left the White House:—

ALEXANDER GARDINER TO MISS MARGARET GARDINER.

"WASHINGTON, March 4, 1845.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—To-day we have had the inauguration, and I would not go a half-mile to see the ceremony repeated. None of us attend the inauguration ball to-night, the President deeming it more dignified and proper that himself and Julia should remain at home, and none of the rest of us caring to go, after the fatigues of the week. Last night I was at the Capitol until the adjournment of Congress, passing most of the time in the Executive Chamber with the President and Cabinet, for whom a very good supper was served. The ladies were not admitted; and Julia, after waiting awhile with the ladies of the Cabinet, finding this to be the case, declined making any special application, and returned home. I was present at the adjournment of the House, about two-and-a-

half o'clock in the morning, and heard the valedictory of the Speaker.

"The President and family left the Executive Mansion yesterday at five o'clock. Some three or four hundred of his friends filled the blue room, and escorted him in carriages and on foot to his temporary quarters at Fuller's. In the blue room he was addressed by General Van Ness in highly complimentary terms; and his reply, polished by a melodious voice and most graceful and dignified manner, drew tears from almost every eye. It was the happiest and most touching thing that I ever heard. Upon the arrival of the cortege at Fuller's, double lines were formed to the door, and loud cheers arose from the large concourse assembled, among whom were some fifty or sixty delegates from the White Eagle and Empire Clubs of New York. During the rest of the afternoon and evening the rooms were crowded with visitors, calling to pay their parting respects. This morning I was aroused by a salute from cannon in front of the premises, and renewed cheers for John Tyler. So he emerged from the storms of this wonderful Administration in complete triumph and happy sunshine.

"The family may leave for Virginia to-morrow morning, but probably not before Thursday or Friday. I shall return as soon as I can do so with safety and comfort. I say safety, for the cars will be filled with the outpouring multitude to an extent which will render them almost unsafe for a day or two.

"Mrs. Semple is here—a fine-looking and accomplished woman; so are Robert, John, and Alice. Mrs. Semple, I believe, goes on to Philadelphia with Robert.

"Do n't look for me before my return. Yesterday I saw Judge Nelson inducted as Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States. Your affectionate brother,

"ALEXANDER GARDINER."

MRS. TYLER TO MRS. GARDINER.

"POWHATAN HOUSE, RICHMOND, March 6, 1845.

"MY DEAR MAMA,—We arrived in this city at two o'clock; and, as we will have to tarry until the morning, I feel that I must make a leisure moment, and detail some of the striking and very, very interesting events of the past week ere I reach

Sherwood Forest. And yet, how vain it seems! How inadequate would be any description I could give, with even time before me! The last word has been spoken—the last link is broken that bound me to Washington; and I should like you to have witnessed the emotions, and heard the warm expressions that marked our departure. Let me see—where shall I begin? I will go back to Saturday, though I shall have to be very brief in all I say. Saturday, then, the President approved the Texas Treaty, and I have now suspended from my neck the immortal golden pen given expressly for the occasion. The same day we had a brilliant dinner party for Mr. and Mrs. Polk. I wore my black-blond over white satin, and in the evening received a large number of persons. On Sunday the President held a Cabinet council from compulsion; on Monday a Texas messenger was dispatched; on Sunday evening Mrs. Semple arrived; on Monday, in the morning, we concluded our packing. Mrs. Wilkins and Mrs. Mason came up to my bedroom, and sat a little, while I made my toilet, offering their services in any way. At five in the afternoon a crowd of friends, ladies and gentlemen, assembled in the blue room, to shake hands with us and escort us from the White House. As the President and myself entered they divided into two lines, and, when we had passed to the head of the room, surrounded and saluted us. General Van Ness requested them to stand back, and himself stepped forward and delivered, ‘on behalf, and at the request, of many lady and gentlemen citizens of Washington,’ a farewell address. I saw, before he concluded, a response of some kind would be almost necessary from the President, and I felt a good deal concerned, for I knew he had prepared none, and had not expected to make any; but I might have spared myself all and every fear, for as soon as the General finished he raised his hand, his form expanded, and such a burst of beautiful and poetic eloquence as proceeded from him could only be called inspiration. His voice was more musical than ever; it rose and fell and trembled, and rose again. The effect was irresistible, and the deep admiration and respect it elicited was told truly in the sobs and exclamations of all around. As they shook us by the hand when we entered our carriage they could not utter farewell.

"The 'Empire Club,' *en costume*, was present, and cheered again and again. They followed in the procession which was formed to the hotel, and cheered as we alighted. Among the ladies present whom you know, beside the Cabinet ladies, were Mrs. Roosevelt, Mrs. Beeckman—but I have not time to think and enumerate. At the hotel our visitors did not fall off. We did not attend either the inauguration ball, and the next morning we determined to depart from Washington, adopting 'French leave;' but when we reached the wharf, at nine o'clock in the morning, the boat had gone, and we had to return, almost to our regret. All that day, which was yesterday, our parlor was thronged. Among the visitors was Dr. Rogers, again with Mrs. Pyne. We left at night, and an immense fire in the city raging—the theater and many houses. We had a most affecting parting with our Cabinet; all the ladies wept, and poor Mr. Wilkins almost sunk with emotion. But Alexander can better tell you all these really impressive and not easily forgotten scenes than I can write them. Since my arrival in Richmond, we have been called upon by a number of the best citizens. Among others, Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Ritchie, who promise for me some very agreeable neighbors on James River. There is a Miss Delasfield and a Miss Rogers, from New York, at this house. And now I must bid you adieu in the greatest haste. In the morning, at six o'clock, we start again for 'Sherwood Forest,' in the steamboat, and shall reach it at twelve o'clock. We left Washington at nine last night, but did not start from the wharf until three o'clock this morning. Direct to 'Sherwood Forest,' Charles City County, Virginia, and believe me your affectionate daughter,

"JULIA G. T."

Like most other Presidents Mr. Tyler made no money out of his office. Out of his other resources he was enabled to buy the farm on the James River, in Charles City County, where he spent the greater part of his remaining days. While not especially shrinking from demands made upon him, he did not

again resume the practice of his profession. Nor did he, in the genial occupations of the farm, show the least disposition to treat himself as an object of especial attention on the part of his countrymen. For a time the neighboring Whigs treated him with some coldness, but in time much of the old cordiality returned.

Mr. Tyler's literary acquirements were very considerable, and few Presidents of the United States have been his equal in the public use of the tongue. He was an orator. One of his eulogists says of him in this respect:—

“Mr. Tyler's literary efforts evince genius, attainments, and accomplishments of the highest order. To purity of taste, elegance of diction, and strength of reasoning, he superadds the ornaments of a lively fancy and a copious command of impressive and striking images. His eulogy on Jefferson is decidedly the best that was pronounced on the death of that illustrious man; and his address at the Randolph Macon College exhibits to great advantage his high classical attainments, his refined taste, and his superior talents as a chaste and elegant writer. It is rare to find such accomplishments surviving the rough ordeal of political strife; and when they are seen they never fail to command admiration and attract regard.

“Not only is Mr. Tyler one of the most elegant writers in the country, but he is also one of its most fluent, eloquent, and brilliant orators. In happy, off-hand, extemporaneous speaking he has seldom been equaled, and in more labored and extended efforts he has but few rivals. While a Senator in Congress, he took an active and prominent part in all the debates, and was uniformly listened to with great attention and profound respect. His

manner is impressive on all occasions; affable in social intercourse, forcible in forensic efforts, and eloquent in public debate."

At the beginning of the last great struggle between slavery and freedom in 1860, Mr. Tyler still believed the good sense and patriotism of the people would rule in the last moments, and the Union remain unbroken. But as the destructive tide rolled on he fell in with the project of a "Peace Convention," and desired Virginia to lead in the matter. This she did, and Mr. Tyler was sent as one of her delegates to the convention which met in Washington City, on the 6th of February, 1861. He was elected permanent president of the convention, and on taking the chair made the following speech:—

"GENTLEMEN,—I fear you have committed a great error in appointing me to the honorable position you have assigned me. A long separation from all deliberative bodies has rendered the rules of their proceedings unfamiliar to me; while I should find in my own state of health, variable and fickle as it is, sufficient reason to decline the honor of being your presiding officer. But, in times like these, one has little option left him. Personal considerations should weigh but lightly in the balance. The country is in danger; it is enough; one must take the place assigned him in the great work of reconciliation and adjustment.

"The voice of Virginia has invited her co-States to meet her in council. In the initiation of this Government that same voice was heard and complied with, and the results of seventy odd years have fully attested the wisdom of the decisions then adopted. Is the urgency of her call now less great than it was then? Our godlike fathers created; we have to preserve. They built up, through their wisdom and patriotism, monuments which have eternized their names. You have before you, gentlemen, a task equally grand, equally sublime, quite as

full of glory and immortality. You have to snatch from ruin a great and glorious confederation, to preserve the Government, and to renew and invigorate the Constitution. If you reach the height of this great occasion, your children's children will rise up and call you blessed. I confess myself to be ambitious of sharing in the glory of accomplishing this grand and magnificent result. To have our names enrolled in the Capitol, to be repeated by future generations with grateful applause, this is an honor higher than the mountains, more enduring than monumental alabaster. Yes, Virginia's voice, as in the olden time, has been heard. Her sister States meet her at the council-board. Vermont is here, bringing with her the memories of the past, and reviving in the recollection of all, her Ethan Allen, and his demand for the surrender of Ticonderoga in the name of the Great Jehovah and of the American Congress. New Hampshire is here, her fame illustrated by memorable annals, and still more lately as the birthplace of him who won for himself the name of Defender of the Constitution, and who wrote that letter to John Taylor which has been enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen.

"Massachusetts is not here. [Some member said, 'She is coming.'] I hope so, and that she will bring her daughter, Maine. I did not believe it could well be that the voice which, in other times, was so familiar to her ears, had been addressed to her in vain. Connecticut is here; and she comes, I doubt not, in the spirit of Roger Sherman, whose name, with our very children, has become a household word, and who was in life the embodiment of that sound, practical sense which befits the great lawgiver and constructor of governments. Rhode Island, the land of Roger Williams, is here, one of the two last States in her jealousy of the public liberty, to give in her adhesion to the Constitution, and among the earliest to hasten to its rescue. The great Empire State of New York, represented thus far by but one delegate, is expected daily in fuller force, to join in the great work of healing the discontents of the time and restoring fraternal feeling.

"New Jersey is also here, with the memories of the past covering her all over. Trenton and Princeton live immortal in story, the plains of the last encrimsoned with the heart's

blood of Virginia's sons. Among her delegation I rejoice to recognize a gallant son of a signer of the immortal Declaration which announced to the world that thirteen provinces had become thirteen independent and sovereign States.

"And here, too, is Delaware, the land of the Bayards and Rodneys, whose soil at Brandywine was moistened by the blood of Virginia's youthful Monroe.

"Here is Maryland, whose massive columns moved into line with those of Virginia in the contest for glory, and whose State-house at Annapolis was the theater of a spectacle of a successful commander, who, after liberating his country, gladly ungirthed his sword and laid it down upon the altar of that country. Then comes Pennsylvania, rich in Revolutionary lore, bringing with her the deathless names of Franklin and Morris, and, I trust, ready to renew from the belfry of Independence Hall the chimes of the old bell which announced freedom and independence in former days.

"All hail to North Carolina, with her Mecklenburg Declaration in her hand, standing erect on the ground of her own probity and firmness in the cause of the public, and represented in her attributes by her Macon, and in this assembly by her distinguished son, at no great distance from me. Four daughters of Virginia also cluster around the council-board on the invitation of their ancient mother. The eldest, Kentucky, whose sons, under that intrepid warrior, Anthony Wayne, gave freedom of settlement to the territory of her sister, Ohio. She extends her hand daily and hourly across '*la belle rivière*,' to grasp the hand of some one of kindred blood of the noble States of Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio, who have grown up into powerful States already, grand, potent, and almost imperial.

Tennessee is not here, but is coming, prevented from being here only by the floods which have swollen her rivers. When she arrives, she will wear the badges on her warrior crest of victories won, in company with the Great West, on many an ensanguined plain, and standards torn from the hands of the conquerors at Waterloo. Missouri and Iowa, and Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota still linger behind; but it may be hoped their hearts are with us in the great work we have to do.

"Gentlemen, the eyes of the whole country are turned to this assembly in expectation and hope. I trust that you may prove yourselves worthy of the great occasion. Our ancestors probably committed a blunder in not having fixed upon any fifth decade for a call of a general convention to amend and reform the Constitution. On the contrary they have made the difficulties next to insurmountable to accomplish amendments to an instrument which was perfect for five millions of people, but not wholly so as to thirty millions. Your patriotism will surmount the difficulties, however great, if you will accomplish but one triumph in advance, and that is a triumph over party. And what is party, when compared to the task of rescuing our country from danger? Do that, and one long, loud shout of joy and gladness will resound throughout the land."

This *ad hominem* address was meant for the occasion, and is given here as a piece of history, and as exhibiting Mr. Tyler's own feelings and desires when men hardly knew what was coming or what would be best for the country. While this address follows the usual course in arousing the "second thought," it lacks the business, manly, square-up, front-face kind of ring of the most effective, sensible, and wonderful charity sermon ever preached. The great audience expected a sermon worthy of it, and of a character best suited to loosen the purse-strings. But the preacher simply said:—

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.' There now, go down into your pockets."

But this was, indeed, a great event in the life of Mr. Tyler. With the common view of glory and gratitude he was anxious to share in a work which

would render its makers objects of eternal honor in the memory of a grateful people. He hoped and believed the work would be a success for the sake of the country itself. That his heart was in it there can be no question. His long retirement from public notice had been without event; but it had been honorable, and much of the ill and groundless feeling toward him had died throughout the country, as it had wholly in his own State. And his selection as presiding officer of the convention was wisely made on account of his own character, the position of his State, and the advantage the proceedings would thereby derive.

Mr. Tyler's conduct throughout the convention was admirable, and earnestly did he strive to see something produced which would yet save the country without the peril of extreme measures. But the convention was unable to present an acceptable plan of settlement, and even the delegates from Virginia were not agreed among themselves, nor indeed as to the plan offered by the convention.

In this state of affairs Mr. Tyler returned home. Although he had accomplished nothing really, the effort he had made was, perhaps, the most gratifying work of his life, as it certainly was so regarded by the country at the time, and not forgotten by some when events quickly following hurried him, of necessity, into the inevitable conflict.

On the 13th of March, 1861, the Virginia State Convention met to hear the report of her delegates to Washington, and to pass the ordinance of secession.

In this, as in the "Peace Convention," the burden of all the difficulty was slavery. That was the irreconcilable feature of the whole trouble; and no matter who were the agitators, or who were wrong or who were right, that was now to be the cause of the bloody war—a war on a scale which dwindled to insignificance all wars in America. An event had occurred which, it was claimed, meant the downfall of slavery. The safety of that institution demanded a separate government especially adapted to its perpetuation. This institution and other interminable issues and incongruities outweighed the Union. In this State Convention Mr. Tyler gave an account of the part he took in the "Peace Convention," and in the course of his long speech of two or three days he made the following utterances:—

"I was told that in this hour of the country's danger my services were needed; and under the resolutions of the Legislature of Virginia, which I will very briefly advert to as containing my letter of instructions, I resolved, at peril to myself, and at every possible personal inconvenience, to venture upon the task which my native State had imposed upon me. . . .

"What could have carried me to Washington but the debt of gratitude which I felt I owed my State and my fellow-countrymen, and the deep solicitude which I experienced in this hour of the Nation's peril? I confess to an additional motive of a personal character. If ever there lived a man ambitious of winning that true glory which can alone arise from the fulfillment of the whole duty of a patriot, that man now addresses you. I aspired to the glory of aiding to settle this controversy. . . . I had been surrounded by the echoes of applause in the course of my journey through life; but to encircle my brow, Mr. President, with the wreath to be worn by the restoration of this Union, in all its plenitude,

perfect as it was before the severance, would have been to me the proud crowning act of my life. That was the feeling that inspired my heart. . . .

“Where is that Union now which we once so much loved? Where its beautiful flag, which waved over a land of wealth, of grandeur, and of beauty? Wrong, abuse, contumely, unconstitutional acts, looking to a higher law than the Constitution, thus setting men free from their obligations to society, have cut the ship of State loose from her moorings, and here she is, drifting without helm or compass, amid rocks and whirlpools, her fragments floating in every direction. One part has gone South, while other parts, moored for this moment, will probably at the next break loose from their insecure anchorage. I grieve over this state of things by day and by night. When I think of the manner in which all this has been brought about by a race of hungry, artful Catilines, who have misled the Northern mind solely for their own aggrandizement, my blood becomes so heated in my veins as to scald and burn them in its rapid flow. . . .

“Why, sir, the men now in power have not yet recognized the sovereignty of the Southern States, and probably do not intend to recognize it. I do not know, however, what they mean. If they could be lifted up to a lofty eminence of policy, I would say to them, recognize it at once; go into copartnership, not upon the restoration of the old Union, if that can not be, and which may have become impossible, but by originating a commercial treaty, and forming an offensive and defensive alliance; secure to yourselves all that is left of the old confederacy; even its remains would be valuable. But there is no feeling of this kind exhibited. . . .

“Well, sir, if you can not act with those whose sentiments you consider extreme, let Virginia act for herself. Let your wise heads lay down your ultimatum. Let that ultimatum consist of ample and full protection. Then send it to your border Slave States, and send it to all the Free States, saying: ‘Here is our ultimatum; if you do not take that, we go out; we can not longer continue with you.’ It is not possible for us to remain at rest; we must do something. . . .

“Put down your ultimatum, and don’t stop there. Go a

little further. You have already reported an anti-coercion bill. Let it be strong; let there be no sort of reserve upon its face. Let it say to these men in Washington, as King Canute said to the waters of the great deep: 'Thus far, and no farther.' Arrest their warlike movements, if possible. Go a little further. Insist upon the observance of the *statu quo* precisely as it is. Not an additional man to garrison Fortress Monroe; not another to Harper's Ferry; not another to Fort Washington; not another at the city of Washington. Do that, and you will do right. Then you can give time, reasonable time, for action on your ultimatum. Revolutions never go backward. Ponder on this and be ready. . . .

"Now, sir, much has been said against South Carolina. Well, look upon the other hand, if you please. That she might have been more patient and waited for the co-operation of her sister States, may be admitted. I have thought that the Cotton States had better retained their Senators and Representatives in their seats at Washington. Sir, they had in their hands a great power—the power of control over the public expenditures. They were in a majority in both Houses of Congress, and they were destined to hold that majority for two years, if they chose. . . .

"Now, I hold the opinion that this consultation of the border Slave States will amount to nothing. But put forth your ultimatum, sir; let it be, as I have said, strong and decisive, full of guarantees of security, and I don't know what will be the effect of it, if you can get it adopted. I am not prepared to say that it will not restore peace to this glorious Union; I am not prepared to say that, with these guarantees of protection, the seceded States of the South will not come back. . . .

"I look with fear and trembling, to some extent, at the condition of my country. But I do want to see Virginia united. I wish to see her carrying her head as she carried it in former times. The time was when she did not fear. I have entire confidence that her proud crest will yet be seen waving in that great procession of States that go up to the temple to make their vows to maintain their liberties, 'peaceably if they can, forcibly if they must.'"

These extracts sufficiently show that Mr. Tyler had no remedy for the evil day he dreaded. It was simply meet sectional demand and aggression by sectional demand and aggression; extort, extort, 'or secede. And they also clearly show, notwithstanding Mr. Tyler's strong desire, and his true and manly efforts for the Union, some kind of Union, any kind being preferable to none, that, when the moment came for him to choose between Virginia and the Union, he would not be found hesitating as to his position. True to his principles in 1832, he was absolutely opposed to any form or degree of coercion, so slender and peculiar was the tie in his philosophy that held the Union together; and when Mr. Lincoln issued his proclamation against rebellion, Mr. Tyler's influence immediately went to the side of secession; and when Virginia had finally taken her place with the other rebellious States, Mr. Tyler offered himself as a candidate for election to the Confederate Congress, and was elected by a large majority from his district. He was now an old man, yet he entered upon this strange, new career with great earnestness and zeal, especially for a man whose political enemies had taken a peculiar pleasure in styling him lazy and indifferent to his official duties.

But Mr. Tyler's race was about run. He was not destined to see the end of the great conflict. After a short illness, on the night of the 17th of January, 1862, in his lodgings at Richmond, he died. He had not yet reached his seventy-second year by

ten weeks, and was intellectually vigorous as at any period of his life. He had been reared in the Episcopalian faith, and was a member of that Church at the time of his death, and although of exemplary habits and morals was not a religious man. On the morning of the 18th the Governor of Virginia called the attention of the Legislature to the fact of Mr. Tyler's death, and that body appropriately took action in eulogies and resolutions upon his life, services, and final end. On the 20th of the same month the Confederate Congress also commemorated his services and death; and now many of his former political enemies, who in the last days had stood by his side undivided, were his warmest eulogists. His body was deposited at Hollywood Cemetery, near Richmond, not far from that of James Monroe, and there it still lies, although his will provided for its burial at "Sherwood Forest," his farm in Charles City County.

Little was said of Mr. Tyler's death beyond the borders of the States in rebellion; but much of that little was unfavorable, as most that had been said about him in his life. The country was then in no mood, nor indeed has it ever been, for the exercise of that charity towards him which for many of his last years he had felt and practiced toward all the world. He had been no way instrumental in bringing about secession. He was opposed to it; and was of the last who made a pacific struggle against it. He wanted the Union to be preserved; he wanted it to be restored, but by peaceable means, and without

jeopardy to the institution to which he clung to the last. Mr. Tyler's final course in identifying himself with the rebellion may be questioned. This course was left him, or quiet retirement, if possible, in his home. He chose activity in the way his State had taken. No man could doubt for a moment where Mr. Tyler would stand when Virginia was involved. His affection for his native State, and his sense of his obligations to it, were always far above his affection for the Union. Although this narrow patriotism, or want of patriotism, may well be assailed from every point of view, no vast numbers of American politicians and public men have, perhaps, risen above it.

Mr. Tyler's disposition towards his enemies generally may be fully inferred from his conduct in reference to Henry Clay. He was not a man to hold and nurse resentment and enmity. A contemporary writer says that long after the Presidency, when Mr. Tyler had come to his senses, he felt and spoke very bitterly against those who had flattered him and hung around him for the favors he could bestow while a resident of the White House, and who deserted him when his power was gone. If there ever was a class of people deserving the utter disgust and contempt of a man of sense, of true and honorable motives, and whom John Tyler would be likely to despise, it would certainly be these cringing, lackadaisical hypocrites. But years before his death he had forgiven all his old enemies, sunny-day scamps, flatterers, and all. At least no

trace can be found of his entertaining bitter feelings towards anybody; and all his letters and speeches extant display his wide charity and kindly inclination to put out of sight the ill-will of the past.

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CHAPTER XX.

AFTER THE PRESIDENCY—A FRIEND'S PARTIAL SKETCH—
IN HOLLYWOOD WITHOUT A MONUMENT.

THE following sketch of Mr. Tyler was prepared especially for this volume by one who could certainly never be charged with being unfriendly to the deeds, principles, character, life, and memory of the last of the Virginia Presidents :—

FROM 1845 TO 1862.

While President Tyler was yet at the White House, he sold certain lands he owned in Kentucky, and sent his son John to Charles City County, Virginia, to invest the proceeds in an estate, whither, on the close of his Administration, he might retire to spend, as he supposed, the rest of his days in peaceful pursuits. He had not saved a cent from his income at the White House and would have emerged from his Administration in sheer poverty had it not been for these Kentucky lands. His son selected a place upon the banks of the James River, a place formerly owned by Collier Minge and named "Walnut Grove." Mr. Tyler added to the house, improved the grounds with trees from the Botanical Garden in Washington, and named the place "Sherwood Forest." This made his eighth place of residence. His father on his death, January 6, 1813, left Greenway to his oldest son, Dr. Wat Henry Tyler, and "Guns," an adjoining farm, fell to the lot of Mr. Tyler. "Guns" was sold some time

afterwards to Mr. Clarke, and with the money he purchased Woodburne. Dr. Wat Tyler, removing to Henry, sold Greenway, whereupon, some time after, Mr. Tyler disposing of Woodburne purchased the home of his father. In 1830 a circumstance occurred which forced him, though very reluctantly, to abandon the county of his birth and seek a new home in Gloucester County. He had gone security for a gentleman and in order to meet the engagement was compelled to sell Greenway, which commanded a fine price, and to retire to the less valuable place in Gloucester. Full of local attachment as he was, this could not have been other than a severe pain to him. He passed six years in this new place of residence; but in 1836, after his resignation as Senator of the United States, he removed to Williamsburg, a more favorable location for the practice of the law, to which he now had to betake himself in order to support his large and expensive family. When he was called to the Presidential chair, his home was still there.

"Sherwood Forest" embraced a plantation of one thousand one hundred acres, most of it good land; very little of it, however, fronting on the river. The house itself was upwards of a mile from the same. To agricultural pursuits and the pleasures of social life the Ex-President now devoted himself, congratulating himself, no doubt, that he was at length released from the turmoils of an active political life, in which he had figured now for more than thirty years.

Most of his children by his former marriage were out in the world with their own families. Mary, the oldest child, had married Henry L. Jones, of Charles City County; Robert Tyler had married Miss Priscilla E. Cooper, daughter of the great tragedian Cooper; John had married Miss Martha Rochelle, of Southampton County; Lizzie had married at the White House Mr. William Waller, and Letitia had married Mr. James Semple. Only

two of his children remained with him at Sherwood Forest, Tazewell and Alice, who, within a comparatively short time thereafter, also married and left the paternal roof. Tazewell married Miss Anne Bridges, of New Kent, and Alice, the Rev. Mr. Dennison.

Most of the leading men of Charles City were bitter Whigs, and at first were rather cool to Mr. Tyler. But such were his popular manners that in a short time he won them all back again to his friendship. Their appointing him overseer of the roads as a mark of ridicule, and his cheerfully accepting the office, and then calling out the farmers to work upon the road-beds in the midst of the harvest, thus turning the joke on the would-be perpetrators, has been often told. One other anecdote is not so familiar. At a public dinner given at the court-house in 1849, Mr. Tyler was present, and made a few remarks in his usual eloquent style. He delivered himself with so much warmth that he carried his audience away entirely, and one of the gentlemen present, Colonel Stubblefield, noted for his Whig proclivities, said in an audible tone, "He is right now!" Quick as lightning, Mr. Tyler turned upon him: "Right, sir! Right here always, sir" (placing his hand on his heart); "wrong here sometimes" (placing his hand on his head). This appeared so natural and heart-spoken that it perfectly electrified the audience.

Mr. Tyler had seven children by his last wife; the very same number that he had by his former one. David Gardiner, John Alexander, Julia, Lachlan, Lyon G., Fitz Walter, and Pearl. All of these are living except Julia, who, marrying William H. Spencer, of New York, died in Geneseo, 1871. Pearl was but two years old when her father died.

Though not taking part in active politics during the period from 1845 to 1860, Mr. Tyler kept up his usual sympathy with the welfare of his country, and watched with an interested eye the course of politics. He was especially

grieved to see the growing jealousy between the North and the South. In later years he had watched with alarm the growth of a party styled Free-Soilers or Abolitionists. Mr. Tyler's views of the Government as a simple confederacy of States, and his life-long jealousy of consolidation, made him regard the ideas of the growing party with distrust and concern. When the Constitution was adopted all the States had slaves but one, and he considered any interference in the domestic institutions of a State in the light of treason to the Constitution. He loved the Union, as existing under the Constitution, with all his heart, and took pride in its power, growth, and grandeur. He therefore could not but look upon this attack on so universal an institution in the South as threatening the very life of the confederacy. And yet he believed in emancipation—an emancipation of that gradual kind which Mr. Jefferson proposed. He saw that any other plan must bring bloodshed, and disrupt the whole country. He belonged to the Colonization Society, and took an active interest in its welfare. He thought that there were conditions of society worse than slavery, and, hence, considered that slavery might be endured till time had accomplished a gradual emancipation. The condition of the slaves upon the plantations was infinitely superior to that of the free poor operatives of the North, or the naked miners of England, or the free peasants of Ireland, the companions of pigs and filth. He thought that slavery had not been entirely without benefit in the most humane and moral light it was viewed. The slaves had been brought as savages to this country, and had been taught religion, and instructed in all the arts of civilization. Was not their present condition preferable to their ancient state of barbarism?

His own treatment of his slaves, of whom he had some sixty in number, was in accordance with his kind and genial disposition. His slaves idolized him. He never

punished without the evidence was overwhelming, tried the case solemnly on the Bible, and never sold any save the fractious and dangerous. On harvest days he would call them to the piazza of the house and treat them to a dram, always, however, demanding a toast in advance, which each orator would give with great gusto; such as, "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip." Did any of his slaves get caught in a storm and become wet, the President had them treated to whisky and water; and, in the September chill and fever days, he provided against sickness by requiring his servants to take a dram of whisky and quinine. Never was medicine so popular!

In all his addresses he was invited to make during this period, at various institutions and on great occasions, and in the letters he wrote, he ever counseled harmony, sought to inspire a spirit of devotion to the Union, deprecated sectional jealousies, and lamented the growing hatred between the North and the South. "No," he said, "leave me for the remnant of my days the belief that the Government and institutions handed down to us by our fathers are to be the rich legacy of our children's children to the latest generation. If this be a delusion, let me still embrace it as a reality. Keep at a distance from me that gaunt and horrible form which is engendered in folly and nurtured in faction, and which slakes its thirst in the tears of broken hearts, and its appetite on the blasted hopes of mankind."

As stated before, he soon won back all his former popularity in the State and county of his birth, not only by the convincing sincerity of his opinions, his honesty and integrity, which won for him the name of "Honest John Tyler," but by his genial and popular manners, and the growing conviction among his former enemies that his course had been right and theirs wrong. Unaffected and unpretending, such was his natural dignity of manners, that whatever might be the circumstances surrounding

him, he inspired respect, and elicited from those who came in contact with him the deepest devotion.

Every morning, accompanied by two of his youngest children, he would make the tour of his farm; and thus circumstanced, would often meet gentlemen of the county, when he would stop his buggy to pass a kind word or inquire after the health of relatives. Plain and unpretending in his dress, in the style of his buggy, and of his old horse, to the last he was "plain John Tyler," and yet of such dignity of character and manner that, when in the Presidential chair, fastidious Charles Dickens spoke of him in his "American Notes" "as becoming his position singularly well," and that, when he ridiculed all other things American. At Hampton, near Fortress Monroe, he owned a house and lot called the "Villa Margaret," and thither in summer he would repair from his farm to enjoy the sea air, the society of the Fort, and the fine fishing prevailing in the waters around. And to fishing he was passionately devoted.

Mr. Tyler was elected in 1859 chancellor of William and Mary College, next to the oldest college in America. In this office he succeeded George Washington, for ever since the death of that patriot the office had been left unfilled. "To the day of his death he felt as honored in succeeding George Washington in that office as he did in the Presidency."

He received the degree of LL. D. from Amherst College, Massachusetts, in 1841, and again from William and Mary College in 1854, 4th of July.

He was constantly being invited to deliver addresses. He spoke at the University of Virginia in 1850; at the Maryland Institute for the Promotion of the Mechanic Arts in 1855; at the Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Settlement of Jamestown; at the One Hundred and Sixty-sixth Anniversary of the College of William and Mary, etc.

He was invited to Richmond in April, 1860, to honor with his presence the occasion of the unveiling of the statue of Henry Clay. His speech in answer to the toast, "The Union," was filled with the most magnanimous sentiments, and replete with that charity which can overlook the most inveterate injuries. He was remonstrated with by some friends for accepting the invitation to honor a man who had in every way tried to bring his Administration into disrepute, and even to stain the integrity of his own name. Mr. Tyler, recognizing amid the faults of the man the bright jewel of talent, ability, and patriotism, disdained to harbor private grievances in his own great soul, but said: "Mr. Clay is a great man, sir. He deserves a statue, and I shall feel it an honor to be present on so great an occasion."

The exasperation between the Northern and Southern States on the subject of slavery had, in 1860, reached the highest pitch. The South bitterly reproached the North with breach of faith and breach of Constitution in refusing to make rendition of fugitives from service, and with a general tendency towards centralization of Government. They claimed that, in the convention of 1787, the question of coercion had been discussed and unanimously voted down, even Mr. Hamilton voting against the proposition and denouncing it. They claimed, also, that on the principles of the Declaration of Independence, "government was based on the consent of the governed." Upon the election of Mr. Lincoln, who embodied all the views hostile to the South, South Carolina, acting upon these pretensions, forthwith withdrew from the Union. Her example was speedily followed in January, 1861, by Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana. It was during this exciting period, when the passions of men were most violently aroused, that that pure and chaste light which was still burning in the circle of his family and friends suddenly shone out in a blaze attracting the attention

of all men till it passed, as suddenly out of the world of action into the world of memory, where its brilliancy can never decline.

Mr. Tyler regretted bitterly the dissensions in the Democratic ranks, which resulted in the nomination of Douglas and Breckinridge by separate factions. With alarm he witnessed the secession of South Carolina, and the threatened secession of the other States mentioned; and despite his age, which had now reached seventy years, he determined to throw himself in the breach, and do all he could to preserve the Union under the Constitution. He advised that Virginia, the mother of States and statesmen, and the oldest government in the United States, should offer her services as mediator. In a letter written to the "Enquirer," and published January 17, 1861, he urged:—

"If I may be permitted to make a suggestion, it would be that the Legislature, without delay, and without interference with its call of a convention, might inaugurate a meeting of the border States of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri, Slave States, and New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa, Free States, to arrange, if possible, a program of adjustment to be submitted to the other States as conclusive of the whole matter. Should they agree, I think their recommendations would be followed by the other States, and incorporated into the Constitution, and placed on the footing of an unalterable compact. Surely no States can be more deeply interested in the work of restoring the country to quiet and harmony. If they can not agree, then it may safely be concluded that the restoration of peace and concord is become impossible. I would have an early day appointed for a meeting of the commissioners, so that Virginia, when she holds her convention, may be in full possession of the result.

"Even if failure to agree shall occur, I would still have the Southern States, as *dernier ressort*, upon assembling in convention, and having incorporated in the present Constitution guarantees going not one iota beyond what strict justice and the

security of the South requires, adopt the Constitution of the United States as it is now, and give a broad invitation to the other States to enter our Union, with the old flag flying over one and all. When all this is done, I would say in conclusion to all my countrymen, Rally back to the Constitution thus invigorated and strengthened, and let there for all time to come be written in every heart as a motto that under all circumstances and in every condition there is but one post of safety, and that is the Constitution."

Allied, as Mr. Tyler naturally was, by association, birth, and every other particular, with the South, there are no words that express love or devotion to the Union and to the old flag stronger than these.

In accordance with these suggestions, the Legislature (which had met in special session January 7, 1861, and on the 14th had issued an order for a convention to be held in Richmond on the 13th of February) did, on the 19th of January, adopt joint resolutions inviting the other States to send commissioners to meet commissioners on the part of Virginia to unite in an earnest effort "to adjust the present unhappy controversies in the spirit in which the Constitution was originally formed, and consistently with its principles, so as to afford to the people of the slaveholding States adequate guarantees for the security of their rights." The commissioners were invited to meet in Washington, February 4, 1861.

The commissioners on the part of Virginia were Ex-President John Tyler, William C. Rives, Judge John W. Brockenbrough, George W. Summers, and James A. Seddon. Mr. Tyler was also appointed a commissioner to wait on the President of the United States; and Judge John Robertson was selected as a commissioner to the State of South Carolina, and the other seceding States, with instructions to request the President and the authorities of such States to agree to abstain, pending the proceedings contemplated by the act of Virginia, from all acts calcu-

lated to produce a collision of arms between the States and the Government of the United States.

Mr. Tyler was at home on the James River when the communication from the Governor reached him, notifying him of his appointment by the Legislature to wait upon the President. In disregard of a severe indisposition, he immediately left for Richmond by the first conveyance, reaching there Tuesday, the 22d of January, and, having had an interview with Governor Letcher and Judge Robertson, proceeded by the morning train to Washington, next day, the 23d. Having arrived in the Capital of the United States, he addressed a note to the President apprising him of his arrival, and requesting the privilege of an audience. He responded promptly by note, and left it optional with Mr. Tyler to select eight o'clock that evening (23d), or an early hour the next morning, for the time of the proposed conference. Mr. Tyler preferred a morning interview.

The President refused in this interview to pledge himself to abstain from all acts of a hostile character, except so far as such a course was implied in his public acts; but did send, as promised, a special message to Congress on the subject. It was either in this interview, or a later one, that President Buchanan said, when urged by Mr. Tyler, in the interests of peace, to withdraw the troops from Fort Sumter in order to prevent bloodshed: "Should I do such an act, I would be instantly burnt in effigy all over the land." "What of that?" replied Mr. Tyler. "Have I not myself stood by this window and seen them burn me in effigy in times as embarrassing as these?"

In the meantime Mr. Tyler was elected a member of the Virginia Convention which was to assemble on February 13th, and on February 4th was again in Washington to be present at the assembling of the Peace Congress.

After the passage of the ordinance the convention

appointed John Tyler, William Ballard Preston, S. McD. Moore, James P. Holcombe, James C. Bruce, and Lewis E. Harvie, commissioners on the part of Virginia to confer with Alexander H. Stephens, commissioner of the Confederate States, for a temporary union of Virginia with said Confederate States. A temporary agreement was entered into by which all Virginia's naval stores, munitions of war, etc., were placed under the control of the other contracting party.

On the fourth Thursday of May, the ordinance of secession being submitted to the vote of the people, the majority in favor of the ratification of the same was one hundred and thirty thousand.

After these matters were consummated, Mr. Tyler, was appointed by the convention as representative in the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States. In this new field Mr. Tyler still shone forth as able as ever, supporting himself with surprising ability, the Nestor in the Confederate councils. In November, 1861, he was put in nomination for the House of Representatives of the Confederate States, and, though opposed by two comparatively young and able-bodied men, received a vote in the district equal to the combined votes of his two opponents, James Lyons and William H. McFarland; and in Charles City County, his native county, he received every vote but one. At this time he was approached on the subject of allowing his name to be used as a candidate for the Presidency of the Confederate government under the permanent constitution. His feeble health and advanced age made him reject the idea of appearing in the race. Before the permanent government went into operation, as it did, on the 22d of February, 1862, John Tyler had ceased to live. A merciful Providence was determined to save him from witnessing the destruction and entire overthrow of those political principles which he had loved and revered from his childhood. . . .

On Sunday morning, the 12th of January, while sipping tea at breakfast at the Exchange Hotel, he suddenly fell from his chair with an apoplectic stroke. He was instantly taken to his room, and Drs. Brown, Crockett, Fairfax, and Miller attended to him. Dr. Miller had assisted in helping him to his apartments. He rallied from the stroke, and seemed at first to be doing well, but on Friday, the 17th, he took a turn for the worse.

At the time of his death there were present in the room Drs. Brown, Peachy, and Miller, Josiah C. Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. Ballard, and Mrs. Tyler and child. Dr. Brown had been sent for, and, on entering the room, Mr. Tyler said: "I am dying, Doctor." One of the attending physicians approached the bedside, and said: "Mr. President, let me give you some stimulant?" "I'll not have it," said the dying sufferer, and in a few moments quietly breathed his last. He died fifteen minutes past twelve o'clock at night, January 18, 1862.

As soon as the announcement was made that Ex-President Tyler was dead, the grief and consternation throughout the city, though in the excitement and trials of war, was plainly evident. At three o'clock in the evening of the 19th the body of the deceased was taken to the capitol, where it lay in state, the corpse being disposed by Lieutenant-Governor Montague, Mr. Isbell of the State Senate, and Mr. Bocock, member of Congress, the members of Congress and House of Delegates attending in procession.

On the 21st the body was removed to the Halls of Congress, and placed in front of the clerk's desk, draped only with the flag of Virginia. Wreaths of evergreens interspread with flowers loaded the coffin. A glass was fitted over the face allowing a survey of those familiar lineaments, which lay placid and calm beneath. Eulogies of the most tender and touching character were delivered by

R. M. T. Hunter, William C. Rives, William H. McFarland, and many others.

After the addresses were ended, the crowd was allowed to enter and view the deceased; and as the gazers filed by to give place to others succeeding, all felt that they looked upon the last *Southern President*.

The funeral occurred on January 22, 1862. The cortege formed from the capitol in the following order:

1. The military.
2. The hearse and pall-bearers, who were Judge J. W. Brockenbrough, of Virginia; Robert Toombs, of Georgia; John B. Clarke, of Missouri; R. W. Barnwell, of South Carolina; Thomas B. Monroe, of Kentucky; Jackson Morton, of Florida; John B. Moorehead, of North Carolina; W. P. Chilton, of Alabama; John Robertson, James Neeson, B. B. Douglas, Thomas M. Isbell, of the Senate of Virginia; W. Newton, J. T. Anderson, Andrew Hunter, W. T. Jones, of the House of Delegates.
3. Family of deceased.
4. Physicians attending upon him in his last illness; also Bishop Johns.
5. Committees of arrangements of Congress, and joint committee of the General Assembly of Virginia.
6. President of the Confederate States.
7. Vice-President and Cabinet.
8. Governor and Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia.
9. Judges of the Courts of the Confederate States and State of Virginia, Attorney-General of Virginia.
10. Congress of Confederate States, preceded by the Speaker, Sergeant-at-Arms, and other officers.
11. Senate of Virginia, preceded by the President *pro tem.*, and attended by the Clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms, and other officers.
12. House of Delegates, preceded by the Speaker, Sergeant-at-Arms, and other officers.

13. Clergy of the city officiating for Congress and the Virginia Legislature.

14. Mayor of Richmond and city authorities.

15. Citizens generally.

The funeral sermon was preached by Bishop Johns, of the Episcopal Church, a life-long friend of the deceased, at St. Paul's Church, after which the procession took its way to the cemetery.

During the burial the troops presented arms. He was buried in President's Section, by the side of Monroe, where he still sleeps soothed by the sound of the rapids of the James, that dear old stream of his boyhood and manhood's love.

The Virginia Legislature passed a resolution on his death authorizing the erection of a suitable monument; but his grave still lies without this token of a State's gratitude. A bust was also taken from the deceased, and it stands in the Capitol of Virginia, along with a very large portrait of him presented recently to the State.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE MAN AND HIS PUBLIC SERVICES—MR. TYLER AND
THE WHIGS—MR. TYLER AND THE DEMOCRATS—
THE STATE-RIGHTS POLITICIAN—WAS
HE A STATESMAN?

THE following letter and accompanying statement from Mr. Tyler, touching important matters in his Administration, are taken from the "Letters and Times of the Tylers:"—

"WASHINGTON, D. C., August 22, 1844.

"GENTLEMEN,—Your letter transmitting to me a copy of the resolutions passed at a conference of Democrats of the city and county of New York, held at the Carleton House on the 6th of August, which was handed to me a few days since, is entitled to receive my warmest acknowledgments. The evidence which the 'resolutions' furnish of the estimate placed on my conduct as to several important measures since I have been at the head of the Administration by the representatives of so large and respectable a portion of my fellow-citizens, could not fail to prove highly acceptable to me. The 'Madisonian' of yesterday will convey to you the information of my withdrawal from the Presidential canvass, along with my reasons for having adopted that step; and I beg to assure you that the resolutions of the Democratic conferees of the city and county of New York have not proved altogether inoperative in producing that determination,

"It has long since been made known to the country that, upon sending in my second veto message to Congress, I submitted in solemn form to the then Cabinet, Mr. Webster, Mr.

Ewing, Mr. Bell, and Mr. Granger being present, the question whether, in connection with that message, in order to relieve my motives from all manner of imputation, I should not accompany it with a positive declaration that I would not permit my name to be used in association with the question of the Presidential succession; and it has also been admitted by the person who has figured more largely before the public as my assailant than any other of that Cabinet, that the unanimous decision to which the Cabinet came was that it would be impolitic and unwise for me to adopt that step. The evasion to which he resorted in his publication, viz., that he gave that advice because he regarded such a declaration out of place in a veto message, was entirely an after-thought, and never once, to my knowledge, breathed in the Cabinet. What time or place could be more appropriate than a message which asserted a great Constitutional principle, to enforce which upon the country every imputation of improper motive in its author ought carefully to be guarded against, it is not easy to explain. I yielded, for the reasons urged upon me, my own convictions, and encountered shortly after the attacks of some of the very men who gave me that advice, and who were the foremost to impute to me the worst and basest of motives. For almost all the time which has since elapsed I have been the object of the most violent attacks in newspapers, in public speeches, and in resolutions adopted at public meetings. No abuse, however excessive, has failed to be lavished upon me.

"I was well prepared to expect this on my accession to the Presidency after the death of General Harrison. A just regard to my own character left me no alternative but to maintain my position firmly, and, unmoved by the combinations which existed against me, to press forward in the discharge of my duty to the country, and, if I could not win its confidence, not only to protect it from injury, but to advance, as far as I could, its highest interests.

"The experiment of free government, subjected to a new and severe trial in the succession, for the first time, of a Vice-President to the Presidency, is now rendered secure in the course which the great party you represent have manifested the resolution to pursue. I deem it only necessary to refer you to

my published address as containing a full exposition of my political views.

"I tender to you, gentlemen, assurances of my high respect.

"JOHN TYLER."

**A STATEMENT OF WHAT TRANSPIRED AFTER THE PASSAGE OF
THE JOINT RESOLUTIONS FOR THE ANNEXATION OF
TEXAS TO THE UNITED STATES.**

"The resolutions reached me, and received my approval on the first day of March, 1845. My official term expired on the 4th of the same month. After my approval had been officially given to the resolutions, Mr. Calhoun, the Secretary of State, called on me, and the conversation immediately turned to the subject of the resolutions. Mr. Calhoun remarked that the power to make the selection between the alternatives resolutions rested with me, and that he hoped I would not hesitate to act. I replied that I entertained no doubt in the matter of the selection; that I regarded the resolution which had been moved and adopted in the Senate, by way of amendment to the House resolution, as designed merely to appease the discontent of some one or two members of that body, and for no other purpose; and that my only doubt of the propriety of immediate and prompt action arose from a feeling of delicacy to my successor. We both regarded the opening of a new negotiation, as proposed by the Senate resolution, as destined to defeat annexation altogether; that Texas, in consequence of the defeat of the late treaty by the Senate, would listen reluctantly to any new proposition for negotiation; that this reluctance would be greatly increased by reason of the very small majorities in Congress by which the resolutions had passed, which might well create a doubt whether a two-thirds vote could be obtained for the ratification of a treaty, and that these doubts might very wisely incline Texas to throw herself upon the good offices of Great Britain and France, with a view to obtain the recognition of her independence by Mexico, in preference to relying on the uncertain contingency of a new negotiation. Upon the point of delicacy to my successor, Mr. Calhoun urged strongly the necessity of immediate action, which he regarded as sufficiently great to overrule all other considerations. It

was enough that Congress had given me the power to act by the terms of the resolutions, and that the urgency of the case was imminent. I give the substance of what transpired, not the words. The conversation terminated by my requesting him to summon a Cabinet for the next day.

"The next day the whole Cabinet assembled; every member gave a decided preference to the House resolution over that of the Senate. I stated to the gentlemen that the only doubt that could exist as to the propriety of immediate action by me might be found in the fact that, as my term of office expired on the Tuesday following, it might bear the appearance of indelicacy to my successor, and imply a want of confidence in him I did not feel, if in the last hours of my official term I anticipated his action; and that it was mainly on this point I desired their advice. All concurred in the necessity of immediate action. Mr. Polk and his Cabinet would necessarily require time to look around them after he and they were installed in office, and that, if Texas was lost by delay, the censure would fall on my Administration. The same considerations for prompt action which have already been mentioned as having occurred in the interview with Mr. Calhoun the day before were again repeated. In their force I fully concurred, and suggested, as an expedient that would save the point of delicacy, that Mr. Calhoun should wait on Mr. Polk, inform him of my action on the subject, and explain to him my reasons therefor. The suggestion was fully approved. Mr. Calhoun waited on Mr. Polk after the meeting of the Cabinet, and reported to me the substance of the interview the next morning, which was, that Mr. Polk declined to express any opinion or to make any suggestion in reference to the subject. The instructions to Mr. Donelson being submitted to and approved by me, were dispatched on the same day."

In 1847 Mr. Tyler appeared with this statement:—

"TO THE EDITORS OF THE 'RICHMOND ENQUIRER:'—

"I have been so constantly and unceasingly the object of violent attack during and since the period that, by an act of

All-wise Providence, and through no volition of my own, the powers and duties of the Executive were devolved upon me, as to become indifferent as to what should be said of me by others. Hence I have remained silent amid the attacks of the public press, the fulminations of Congressional orators, and the bright scintillations of wit which festive occasions have brought forth at my expense. Secure in the possession of my own integrity, I have for the most part smiled at the ascriptions of bad motives for my conduct, which had no purer source of emanation than in the bad motives of those who originated them. Nay, further, when I review the course of my Administration, and see its efforts for the public good crowned with complete success in the accomplishment of every important measure, save one, which was suggested or proposed; when I compare the actual condition of the country on the 4th of April, 1841, with what it was on the 4th of March, 1845, and when I know that, after the struggles of the present day shall have passed away, and those who have taken part in them shall have sunk into their graves, the greater part not even to be remembered, impartial history will not fail to write a faithful account of my actions, I may well be content to let the brawling demagogue and the sly intriguer indulge in any measure of abuse of me they may please.

“The facts of my public life are matters of record, and can neither be expunged nor altered. The impartial future will see the motive in the act, and the just historian will look to the good or evil only which will have been developed, and find in the one or the other cause of censure or of praise. To this ordeal I submit myself without fear. My only solicitude is that conjectures or suppositions, and mere naked statements, unsustained and unsustainable, should be regarded as authentic merely because the source from which they flow is esteemed respectable. It is to guard against this in reference to one of the most prominent acts of my Administration that I now address you, and through you the public.

“In the ‘National Intelligencer’ of the 25th of May, a paper which deservedly ranks amongst the most respectable journals of the day, and which, along with others of the same high class, will hereafter be regarded as one of the lights of history, the following sentence has arrested my attention. Under

the head of an article, 'The Administration and its Organ,' it holds the following language:

"Its editor (speaking of the editor of the 'Union') had not been a week installed in his present official station before he began to foretell the existence of war with Mexico, the curse of which, by his influential agency in the Texas annexation scheme, he has had more to do in inflicting upon the country than any other person whatever, *not excepting President Tyler himself, or the speculators in Texas stocks and lands by whom he was surrounded, counseled, and impelled to this unwise measure.*'

"Now, I do not mean to object to the ascription of great influence to Mr. Ritchie, then senior editor of the 'Richmond Enquirer,' in aiding to carry out the cause of Texas annexation. Far from it. The course of that able and talented editor has been sensibly felt on all questions of public policy for more than a quarter of a century; and I do cheerfully confess that when the 'Enquirer' espoused the Texas cause, I felt increased assurance of the ultimate consummation of that great measure. Nor do I mean to enter into any contest whether the annexation of Texas was either the immediate or remote cause of the existing Mexican War. The editors of the 'Intelligencer,' and their able ally in the anti-annexation cause, the Hon. Thomas H. Benton, may have this either way they please. I will not even stop to inquire whether, if the treaty had been ratified by the Senate, we should have had war or not; but, taking into consideration that at that moment there existed no prospect of any immediate collision with Great Britain on the Oregon question, and so far from it that a stronger feeling of amity had been produced between the two countries by the then recent negotiation of the Ashburton Treaty, it may well be doubted whether Mexico, without the hope of succor or aid from any quarter, would have waged war upon the United States for a matter in which she had no right or interest, both having been conquered from her at San Jacinto, and the conquest recognized by the whole world. When she struck her first blow at General Taylor our relations with Great Britain had undergone a material change, and stood, as the world believed, in a most critical condition. Equally far am I from canvassing, at this time of day, the

wisdom, or its opposite, of Texas annexation. Unwise the editors and others have from the first declared it to be. The large majority of the people of the United States have differed with them in opinion; and the popular judgment having been formally entered up in favor of the measure, the minority should certainly be permitted to enter their complaints when they please and as they please. But what I do complain of is, that the editor should have placed me in the company and under the influence of those of whose individuality I have not the slightest knowledge: 'The speculators in Texas stocks and lands by whom he was surrounded, counseled, and impelled to that unwise measure.' Now the editors have over me decided advantage. If any speculators in Texas stocks or lands have counseled, much less impelled, me to action upon that subject, I declare myself to be wholly ignorant of the fact. Certain it is that I never owned a foot of Texas land or a dollar of Texas stock in my life, nor do I understand the editors of the 'Intelligencer' as intending to intimate such a thing. The plain truth is, that I saw nothing but the country, and the whole country; not this or that section, this or that local interest; but the **WHOLE**—the good, the strength, the glory of the whole country in the measure.

"Nor was it until I received *authentic* information that other nations were exerting all their efforts to induce a course of action on the part of Texas at war, as I firmly believed, with the permanent interests of the United States, that I gave directions to my lamented friend, Abel P. Upshur, then Secretary of State, to break up and scatter to the winds the web of their intrigues by a direct proposition for annexation. I advised with no one, consulted with no one, save him in taking the initiative. I knew 'no holders of stock or owners of lands in the matter,' and I aver that the public considerations, which I have before referred to, alone impelled me to direct the negotiation. Nay, I may go even farther and declare that, before the initiative was taken, and when the preliminaries were nearly all arranged, their completion being alone prevented by the death of Mr. Upshur, and the appointment of an adjunct commissioner to Mr. Van Zandt by Texas, I have no reason to believe that 'the holders of stock or owners of lands' knew anything of what

was going on, since secrecy was enjoined as indispensably necessary to avoid awakening into action, what we had reason to expect, a more subtle and still more active intrigue on the part of other governments in order to countervail us. So much I have felt myself constrained to say with a view to a true history of the measure in its origin; and I trust that what I have said will be sufficient to relieve the minds of the respectable editors of the 'Intelligencer' of the impressions under which they have seemed to labor, and to which they have given utterance.

"As to the thousand and one newspaper paragraphs which would fain persuade the country that I was in leading-strings during my term of service, first under the influence of this man and then of that man, I care but little; and quite as indifferent am I to the declaration with which sometimes even the Senate Chamber has been favored, that my Administration was *weak*. Weak I readily admit it to have been in the number of partisans on the floor of Congress; but it was strong enough to carry its measures, and to illustrate most thoroughly the fact that, to keep the three departments of the Government separate and distinct, no Executive influence in Congress, no Congressional powers in the Executive, and the Supreme Court perfectly independent of both, is not only wise in theory, but sound also in practice. Measures are then alone considered; and the Executive may justly be regarded as *strongest* which, without partisans, was enabled to carry through nearly all its measures, and even now subjects some of its opponents to the necessity of making speeches in public places in order to explain away the repugnance felt by the country to their opposition to those of most importance.

"I am, gentlemen, with great respect, yours, etc.,

"J. TYLER."

"NEW YORK, September 1, 1847.

"TO THE EDITORS OF THE 'ENQUIRER':—

"The very brief letter under my signature, which was evoked by a paragraph in the 'National Intelligencer,' and kindly given a place in the columns of your paper some two months ago, has, to my no little astonishment, called forth a

public letter from the pen of Senator Houston, of Texas, on matters not put in issue by that article, which, because of the great respectability of the paper in which it appeared, I deemed it proper to notice. Nothing certainly was further from my intention than to have involved the Ex-President, now the Senator from Texas, in the necessity of any exposition upon the subject. Whatever doubt existed as to his real desire for the annexation of Texas to the United States had by a previous publication, either in the form of a speech or letter—I forget which, nor is it material to remember—been sufficiently cleared up by the declaration that *he only coquetted with England* in all he had done, with a view, as we are now told, to produce an impression with the over-credulous people of the United States, as well as those intrusted with the administration of their public affairs, that the ‘golden moment’ for annexation had arrived, and if permitted to pass could never be recalled.

“Aided by the *silence of the Texas press*, and, for aught I know, by other and still more imposing means, Mr. Houston certainly succeeded in impressing General Jackson, to whom in the exuberance of his devotion he ascribes the whole honor of the measure, with the belief that the *coquette* would, unless prevented by prompt action, very soon fall into the arms of another, and thus be forever lost to the United States. That time-honored patriot has descended to the grave under the full conviction that what he avouched to the American people was true in every word and in every letter. He was incapable of giving utterance to what he felt to be untrue, and I may safely add that he looked too deeply into the deeds of men, and understood too thoroughly their motives, to be easily deceived. He saw as readily as others the great stake at issue in the question of annexation—a stake which the leading States of Europe would be quite as eager to gain as the United States; and he possessed as full a knowledge of the necessity which would compel Texas to resort to expedients to rescue herself from the unhappy condition in which Mr. Houston describes her to have been in 1841, as the President of Texas himself.

“Those expedients are now for the first time promulgated to the world by Mr. Houston, as having been deliberately weighed, considered, and adopted by himself. The first was to

obtain annexation with the United States; that failing, the second was to obtain from Mexico the recognition of the independence of Texas; and failing in both these, the third was to form a defensive alliance with some foreign power against Mexico. In order to accomplish the last two of these objects, the President of Texas had spread out before him as broad a field for diplomacy as could well have been desired. His first expedient, annexation to the United States, was very soon exhausted, since Mr. Reilly, who had been instructed to propose annexation at an early day of my Administration, so utterly failed as not only to withdraw the proposition, but to accompany the withdrawal with the declaration that Texas would never renew it. After Mr. Reilly's failure, the question naturally arose, What course did the President of Texas then pursue? Did he fold his arms in apathy, or did he press on to the accomplishment of his second and third expedients? Did he seek to interest other governments in the affairs of Texas, so far as to induce their interposition with Mexico, in order to obtain an acknowledgment of independence? and was it, or not, through their interposition that a *quasi* armistice was at length obtained?—an armistice which, however, opened the door to an acknowledgment of Texan independence by Mexico no wider than it had before stood. After the failure of his first expedient, did Mr. Houston stand with his arms folded, and fall into an apoplectic slumber? It was not until his Presidential term had run the greater part of its course that the United States Executive, startled by intelligence received from London, and confirmed by the representative from Texas at that court, deemed it necessary to institute inquiries, through its accredited organs, for the purpose of ascertaining the true condition of things. Those inquiries developed the active efforts made by associated individuals to insure the fulfillment of their intrigues, and the extent of the countenance which had been bestowed upon them by the Ministry of Great Britain, which was more publicly and openly avowed on the floor of the British Parliament in a debate in which Lord Brougham, whose sentiments were fully re-echoed by the British Minister, bore a conspicuous part. In that debate the Texan was declared to be *the all-important question*, and this, not so much on its own

account in the abstract, as in its bearing and effect on the condition of the United States.

"There was no longer any room to doubt that the eyes of foreign powers, as well as of associated companies, were strained in that direction; and I repeat in this place what I said in my former letter, that I resolved upon the proposition for annexation as the readiest, if not the only, mode 'to scatter the web of their intrigues,' either actual or contemplated. Notwithstanding, however, the authentic information received by the United States Executive, all of which has been heretofore in official documents communicated to the public, and notwithstanding the great interest with which Texas was regarded by the distinguished statesmen of England, Mr. Houston, who is not content to speak for himself alone, but also for the whole world, would fain induce the country to believe that the British ministry folded their arms in inaction, and that the Abolition Society of Great Britain reposed in undisturbed slumber. He seems also most strangely to forget that the City of Mexico was as important a place for concocting and carrying on intrigues as the city of Austin itself.

"In taking the initiative, I was not in the least controlled by the feelings of the Texan Executive, nor did any thing which had proceeded from it stimulate me to action. Texas was surrounded by well-known embarrassments, exhausted by a long war, her industries paralyzed, and her resources almost annihilated, and as she had been repeatedly repelled in her advances to the Government of the United States, it was naturally concluded that she would look elsewhere for succor and for aid. The Executive of Texas had tried annexation, and failed; it had obtained no recognition of independence by Mexico. What other expedient remained but to make the best terms it could with either France or England, or both, which, giving it breathing time, would enable it to repair the energies of the country and recover it from the state of deep depression in which it was placed? The American Minister (Mr. Murphy) was therefore directed to urge annexation on the Executive of Texas. This was accordingly done, and Mr. Houston in his letter sets forth the terms which, as a condition precedent, he thought it proper to exact from an overzealous but devoted

friend to the measure. I must be permitted to say that it would have better concluded Mr. Houston's account of the matter if he had seen cause to have informed the public that the terms thus exacted were promptly disavowed by the Executive, it being firmly fixed in its devotion to the Constitution of the United States, and that Constitution nowhere conferring the power on the President to transfer his authority over the army or navy, or any portion of either, to a foreign potentate, or to enter into any alliance, defensive or otherwise, without the previous sanction of the Senate. This was as well known to Mr. Houston as to myself. He had filled important stations in the United States prior to his emigration to Texas, and was believed to be well acquainted with the limitations and restrictions imposed by the Constitution on all its functionaries. Mr. Houston will pardon me for frankly saying that this arrangement, thus made with Mr. Murphy, did at the time excite a suspicion on my part that he wanted but a plausible pretext to defeat annexation altogether. He will find in that act, independently of their own personal merits, the secret motive for the appointment of General Howard, who had belonged to Mr. Houston's military family when governor of Tennessee, in place of Mr. Murphy, and after the death of General Howard, of Major Donelson, from the household of General Jackson, who was regarded as the idol of Mr. Houston's political worship. Both these gentlemen were well worthy of their appointments, and acquitted themselves of their high duties with ability and zeal; but yet, could I have been satisfied at the time that the President of Texas was playing the coquette, and merely indulging in a course of innocent flirtation, in order to awaken the jealousies of the people of the United States, it is quite probable I should have selected for the mission others who stood more closely allied to my Administration. The flirtation with Mr. Murphy was very soon quieted, by a disavowal of what he had inconsiderately, but from the best of motives, been led to do; but when the coquetry with England was afterwards actually carried, through the active agency of the British Minister, into an acknowledgment by Mexico of the independence of Texas, upon the sole condition that she would renounce annexation to the United States, it was near becoming as serious

as any love affair in the calendar. What if the United States had presented at the time no definite proposition for annexation, is any one prepared to say that the Mexican proposition would not have been accepted? Will any one venture to say that General Jackson was so far deceived, or the American people so far misled by their jealousy, as to have been mistaken in supposing that the 'golden moment' had in fact arrived? Or can it be said that I was very far mistaken in the declaration that the proposition for annexation scattered to the winds all the webs of intrigue wherever woven? Alas for annexation, if the American Executive had been driven to the alternative of presenting a new basis of negotiation in place of definite terms!

"In declaring the opinion that the death of Mr. Upshur, and the appointment of an adjunct commissioner to Mr. Van Zandt, alone prevented the completion of a treaty at an earlier day, I neither designed to utter complaint against an All-wise Providence for removing from my side my friend and able counselor, nor against the executive of Texas for appointing an adjunct commissioner. It was a solemn occasion, that of merging the absolute sovereignty of one State into that of others, and Texas could not well have used too much caution in its performance. Certain it is that no adjunct could have been more acceptable to the United States than Governor Henderson. I did but urge that view to show that so secret had been, and so expeditious would have been, the course of the United States Executive on the subject that the treaty, but for the two circumstances alluded to, would have been consummated before the speculators in Texan stock or holders of Texas lands would ever have heard of it. I think the remark admits in fairness no other construction.

"As to the ascription made by Mr. Houston to General Jackson of the success of the measure, I have nothing more than this to say, that I took the initiative without any previous consultation with that distinguished man. He gave to the action of the Executive his zealous and cordial support, and I would be the last to deny him the full measure of honor which his patriotic advocacy implied. His name was undoubtedly a tower of strength to any cause he espoused; but there were

other auxiliaries who deserve to be noticed in connection with the matter. I omit the names of Mr. Upshur, Mr. Nelson, and Mr. Calhoun, who successively filled the chair of the State Department, and after them of my entire Cabinet. They were a part of my own identity; and that each was worthy of my confidence, and that of the country, is sufficiently demonstrated by the fruits of their labors. I choose to mention others, not members of my political family, among the most prominent of whom was Mr. Walker, the present Secretary of the Treasury, whose writings unveiled the true merits of the question, and, aided by the expositions of many editors of the newspaper press, brought the public mind to a just and sound decision.

"I was myself sustained and encouraged by the opinions of other distinguished citizens, among whom I take pleasure in mentioning the name of one who once would have commanded the respect, if not the confidence, of thousands, but who at the time rested under a cloud, and spoke to me from the shades of Andalusia—I mean the late Nicholas Biddle, with whom I differed so widely on the subject of the Bank of the United States. His bright and accomplished mind did not fail to embrace in its full extent the value of the virtual monopoly of the cotton plant, secured to the United States by the acquisition of Texas—a monopoly more potential in the affairs of the world than millions of armed men.

"I have only to say, in conclusion, that I shall content myself in all else that relates to the annexation of Texas by referring to the public and official documents already spread before the country.

JOHN TYLER."

As to his views and course concerning Oregon Mr. Tyler wrote to his son Robert:—

"SHEERWOOD FOREST, December 11, 1845.

"MY SON,—Your letter of the 4th December, with its inclosures, reached me last night, and called my attention more particularly to the message than before. The ambiguity in its language had not struck me; but, on the contrary, I had read it as distinctly referring to the administrations of Messrs. Monroe and Adams in the offers made of compromise by adopting the forty-ninth degree, 'with a further concession of the free

navigation of the Columbia River south of that latitude.' But the expression subsequently used—viz., that in 1843 our envoy at London 'was authorized to make a similar offer to those made in 1818 and 1826'—has produced all the difficulty. My recollection of the matter is that the Secretary of State was directed to write a letter to our envoy to act merely as a pulse-feeler of the British Ministry, in order to ascertain how nearly we could approach a settlement, and that his conversations were to be of a cautious character, without any commitment on our part until further instructions. Mr. Everett accordingly sounded the British Ministry; but, coming to no satisfactory result, and it being a matter of too much delicacy to trust anywhere than under the immediate eye of the Government at Washington, the negotiation was transferred thither.

"I looked exclusively to an adjustment by the forty-ninth degree, and never dreamed for a moment of surrendering the free navigation of the Columbia. But at the same time it is due to Mr. Monroe and Mr. Adams to say that their proposition of compromise by the forty-ninth degree was in no great respect augmented by their offer to concede the free navigation of the Columbia, since settling the line at the forty-ninth no British colony or settlement could be reached through that river by a British vessel, and the only advantage to her would have been the furnishing the American settlers with articles of commerce in common with our own ships. If you will look at the map you will readily perceive this. The British government is not looking so much to that river as to her settlements upon it, and the country stretching away to the St. Francois. The chief settlement in the Territory is at Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia, and there the Hudson Bay Company has a strong location. I never dreamed of ceding this country, unless for the greater equivalent of California, which I fancied Great Britain might be able to obtain for us through her influence in Mexico; and this was but a dream of policy which was never embodied. I confess that throughout the whole of this business I have been firmly impressed with the belief that our true policy was to let things take their natural course under an improved treaty of joint occupancy. Lord Aberdeen thought otherwise, and the clamor from the West came up, and hence

the trial to adjust by negotiation. But, my son, while your letter to the editor was proper, yet there can be no occasion for writing in vindication of my course. The documents now I presume to be published will speak for themselves; and even if such offer as was made by Mr. Monroe had been repeated by me, we should have in the memory of that man a strong supporter.

"One fact has been omitted by Mr. Polk, and of great importance it is. The British government proposed a reference to arbitration, which I rejected. Why this was omitted by Mr. Polk I can not well conceive. But we need feel no concern about it, as it occurred under Calhoun, and he will be ready to explain; and yet this was made by Pakenham as late as the fall of 1844, or possibly the winter of that year; and yet omitting this fact Mr. Polk says: 'When I came into office I found this to be the state of the negotiation.'"

Thus has Mr. Tyler been made to speak of the main features of his Presidential services. And it must be apparent that for an Administration so hampered by the strange and difficult position of the Executive, for peaceful times it embraced not a few extraordinarily interesting features. But these have been set forth with sufficient fullness, perhaps, and certainly in a way to weaken materially the popular fallacy that there was little or nothing in either Mr. Tyler or his Administration.

Although Mr. Tyler was one of the most unyielding and extreme of the old-school of State-Rights politicians, he was not, strictly speaking, a nullifier. He was never a "fire-eater." In a certain sense he upheld South Carolina in 1832, but he disclaimed all sympathy with some of her acts. He could and did not approve her course. Nor could he approve General Jackson's coercive measures. If he did not

sanction nullification he did not tolerate force on the part of the Government. His State-Sovereignty theory was at the bottom of his conduct in 1832 and in 1861, as it had been throughout his political career. During his Presidency, to a great extent, his extreme State-Rights views gave way to his sense of obligation to the general welfare, to the country at large. His Presidency was national far beyond his creed, but not beyond his disposition. Of all men who have adhered to the dogma of State Rights, few, if any, of them were so free from sectional narrowness in practice and feeling as Mr. Tyler. His conduct in the Presidential office, and in his efforts in behalf of the Union on the verge of the Rebellion, well demonstrated the great inconsistency of extreme attachment to the doctrine of State Sovereignty. He believed the State was before and above the Union, that the State was the originator of the Union, that it was supreme, and hence that it had power at any time, with or without provocation, to withdraw from the Union. A peaceful dissolution was always a possibility of his theory. While the State had this right and power at all times, it had at no time the right to resist or nullify. Nullification was wrong, but secession was right. Or if it was not politic, and it seldom could be, perhaps, the privilege still remained in the State. When brought to the test, Mr. Tyler was always consistent on this theory. In his "Seven Decades," Mr. Wise maintains that Tyler was absolutely wrong in this, that one of the great errors of his life he committed in

not urging Virginia to the last and always to remain in and not try to go out of the Union while fighting the battles of the Rebellion. Some other State-Rights politicians took this Wise view, but Mr. Tyler believed it to be wholly wrong. In the Union there could be no war; there could be only acquiescence. The final remedy for any evil was simply withdrawal. When this privilege was denied to a State, her last resort was war. To fight in the Union was an impossibility. But the result of the Rebellion or "Civil War" fully demonstrated the impracticability of fighting at all, as the war also demonstrated, beyond a doubt, the impossibility of peaceable secession. Thus died the extreme phase of State Rights. That it was ever well-founded, or that it was wise and statesman-like to advocate it, few, perhaps, will now maintain. In the future political contests of the United States the dogma of State Rights can be of little consequence. That the just, modified conservative principle from which it sprang should always be preserved may not be a matter of question, although its preservation in any degree can be no special argument in proof of the republican character of the Government. State lines even may not exist in the most radical republics. Mr. Tyler's, or the merely sectional or slavery view of State Rights, ceased to exist or be of political importance with the downfall of the institution that needed and propped it. With it fell Mr. Tyler's claim to statesmanship so far as it rested upon this dogma. That he ever reached the position of a statesman in the pure sense of the term,

may be a matter of doubt. In a fair view he certainly, however, stood above the mere politician. He was too open, upright, and independent to stoop to partisan trickery. His aspirations were undoubtedly statesman-like, and if he never reached the rarely attained height, a time-serving politician he was not, and really could not be.

No President of the United States has been so imperfectly understood and so little appreciated, and so persistently misrepresented to this day, as John Tyler. He was unfortunate in doing what he believed to be right, and thereby losing the respect of the Democratic party, to which he really always belonged, if he belonged to any; and he was then unfortunate in doing what he believed to be right, and thereby losing the respect of the Whig party, to which he really never did belong, but which expected him to do its will because it had placed him where he could do so.

The Whigs had little just ground of complaint against him; and at all events he, perhaps, had better foundations for dissatisfaction with their conduct toward him. Mr. Tyler and the Whigs were disappointed. Neither he nor they had the remotest idea that he would ever be President. Through sympathy for their misfortune and a good disposition to deal well with them, and a real desire to change the current of governmental affairs in some respects, which he believed to be wrong under the former Administration, he entered upon his office anxious to conduct its duties harmoniously and satisfactorily.

Nor did he desert the Whigs during his Presidency. It was trifling to talk of his treason to the Whigs. The scheme to establish a United States Bank he opposed and defeated, and this was his great sin against the Whigs. But he always had been opposed to that, and the Whigs knew it. He never believed that General Harrison would have sanctioned the creation of a bank, and in this he was joined by others. That Harrison would have supported a bank is mere conjecture, perhaps. Mr. Tyler sanctioned the Bankrupt Act, then a Whig measure; he signed the tariff of 1842; and much of the strictly Whig legislation of his time he quietly sustained. He did not succeed in correcting the evils of partisan appointments, but in this he did quite as well as any of his successors.

At the White House no President was ever more approachable, and more considerate of the feelings of others. If he was an aristocrat, he exhibited the fact as little as any Democrat, barely excepting Thomas Jefferson, who was the founder, only in a limited sense, of the modern school of Democracy. The opposition, abuse, misrepresentation, slander, and defamation he received from the Whigs, from every source, indeed, did not affect his temper. Whether assailed or favored by one party or the other, he kept on his even way. When the bank question was finally disposed of, and the camel's back broken, he spoke with greater freedom and positiveness. Yet he had no bitterness in him; even his revilers at the time, or in after life, he did not

revile in turn. The ordinary appropriations for the White House were sparingly made, or withheld often, yet he went on his way all the same.

He fell in with the Whigs and became inconsistent, and was said to be aspiring by many, and without aspiration by those who knew him best. Yet here was his great offense. But the same, at least, may be said of him that was said by a fine writer of Mr. Disraeli, "He has not been more inconsistent than many of his friends and some of his opponents."

To accuse Mr. Tyler of deliberate double-facedness and insincerity is wholly unwarrantable. His great desire, passion, for popularity never could have sanctioned such an assumption in the face of other things. Although some of Mr. Tyler's ideas were loosely held, as is the case of most intelligent men, more so than with ignorant ones, many of his ideas held him very strongly. Yet had he been in perfect accord with any party in power, it would not be difficult to say what his Administration would have been. Men's opinions are, at least, as long-lived as their deeds, and do not die with them. At the outset of this work I heard no good of Mr. Tyler. He was without a party, and hence without defenders who needed him. The voice of his friends seemed uncertain and untrustworthy amidst the general revilings. I approached him with doubt and hesitation. I have not spared those who strove to use him against his conscience; nor his enemies, those who misrepresented him, as has been found, without just grounds, or with one cause against him

and two against themselves; I have not spared his friends of any grade; nor have I spared him. And, in the main, I feel that I have succeeded in giving him and his Administration the right attitude in history. But this faith I leave for the judgment of a Nation charitable and fair, in the "second thought" towards the living and more so towards the dead, even in politics.

CHAPTER XXII.

HOME OF THE TYLERS—THE TYLERS IN THE WHITE
HOUSE—DEATH OF THE MISTRESS—A NOBLE
CHARACTER.

HAVING become fairly started in his political career, Mr. Tyler was married, on the 29th of March, 1813, to Letitia Christian, daughter of Robert Christian, a Whig leader of character in New Kent County, Virginia. The Christians belonged to an old, widely connected, and valuable family, and, although opposed to the politics of Mr. Tyler, they were attached to him, and favored his interests. Robert Christian filled some responsible offices in the State, and was the most influential and considerable member of his family, although several of the Christians were men of some consequence. Mr. Tyler's marriage was one of his many pieces of good fortune. It united two influential families, opposite in politics, and the Whigs were often brought to his support through the influence of the Christians. Robert Christian was a man of wealth, and, to some extent, Mr. Tyler was benefited by this fact. But by far the best gift he had from the Christians was his wife. She was really a model woman. Her mother, Mary Brown, belonged to a family many

members of which became distinguished in the affairs of Virginia and Kentucky.

The following letters, taken from the "Letters and Times of the Tylers," will be of interest at this point:—

TO DR. HENRY CURTIS.

"GREENWAY, March 23, 1813.

"DEAR HENRY,—On the 29th instant I lead my Letitia to the altar, and if you can be present at the ceremony I shall derive additional satisfaction therefrom. All would be pleased to see you at Mr. C.'s. I had really calculated on experiencing a tremor on the near approach of the day; but I believe that I am so much of the old man already as to feel less dismay at a change of situation than the greater part of those of my age. I have reflected deeply upon the consequences, and, whether prosperity smiles or adversity frowns, I believe that I shall still keep from sinking. To sink with prosperity may appear at first view an awkward expression, but many more are ruined by its smiles and blandishments than from any other cause.

"I have nothing more to say than that the British have been as high as Sandy Point; and that Time has lost for the last week much of his wonted alacrity, and still goes creeping on upon crutches. What think you? will he go full gallop a twelvemonth hence?

"Yours, etc.,

JOHN TYLER.

"If you come, I do not wish you to experience any disappointment. C. T. still continues in Gloucester; and sister P.'s situation will not admit of her coming. J. T."

JOHN TYLER TO MRS. LETITIA TYLER.

"February 1, 1817.

"I dined on yesterday at the President's. He has invited me three times. Mrs. Madison is certainly a most dignified woman, and entertains her company in superb

style. In point of intellect, too, she far surpasses the foreign ministers' ladies. I wish the great people here knew something more about cooking. They have adopted the French style, and I can not relish anything that they have for dinner in the eatable way. They have good drink, viz., champagne, etc., etc., of which you know I am very fond; but I had much rather dine at home in our plain way, notwithstanding you complain so much of Betsy, than to dine with them. What with their sauces and flum-flummeries, the victuals are intolerable."

TO DR. CURTIS.

"July 20, 1821.

"Letitia has added a fine girl to our family since my return from Washington. All, with the exception of myself, are well. I get on but so so. For a week at a time I feel as well as ever; but then comes the fit again, and I suffer severely. You spoke of having used some remedy in dyspepsia with success; pray write me what it is, and all about it. The disorder not only affects my body, but often my mind. My ideas become confused, and my memory bad while laboring under it. This is a stumbling-block in the way of my intended removal to Petersburg. Unless I can remove it, it would be idle for me to enter into an active and mentally laborious business."

TO DR. CURTIS.

"WOODBURN, September 30, 1821.

"My health is improved somewhat by my mountain trip. The symptoms of my disease are so variable that I can not reduce them to form or order. I shall, however, visit you as soon as I can, as I have a great desire to see you all. My love to your family, and be assured of my friendship."

"MR. ROBERT,—You say you could find nothing to write to me about. Could you not have told me how

the corn had come up, how it looked, how the wheat looked, how many lambs there were, how many times Mr. Vaiden had whipped you, and whether you were able to keep up with your cousin John in Latin?

"Learn to write exactly as you would talk, since the writing a letter is nothing more than conversing with one who is too far off to hear you. None of you said a word about John or Letty, nor of the baby. You might have let me know whether she was handsome or not. But practice makes perfect, and so you must write to me often, and don't think so much of play. Give my love to John, Letitia, and Elizabeth; and when you write next, Mary, make them sit down and send me messages.

"Your father,

JOHN TYLER."

Mrs. Tyler was born November 12, 1790, and was but a few months younger than her husband. She was a beautiful woman in person, and in mind and character she had few equals. Although by no means fond of gay society and frivolous life, she was a favorite in her girlhood, and many a chivalrous gallant envied the good fortune of John Tyler. But she was equally happy in her choice. Mr. Tyler, besides his more than average general qualities, many brilliant ones, and great public success, was peculiarly endowed with the domestic traits necessary to make a good and happy home. Soon after his marriage Mr. Tyler took up his residence on a part of the estate of his father, called "Greenway," which the singular linguist, Henry A. Wise, says was the "birthplace of his home and nativity."

The following letter written by Mr. Tyler to Miss Christian will be of some interest, as being one of

the few now in existence written by him to her either before or after their marriage, and as further serving to illustrate his character :—

“RICHMOND, December 5, 1812.

“Although I could not entirely obtain your permission to write to you, yet I am well aware that you will not be displeased at my exercising a privilege so valuable to one standing in the relation that I do to you. To think of you and to write to you are the only sources from which I can derive any real satisfaction during my residence in this place. The prerogative of thinking of those we love, and from whom we are separated, seems to be guaranteed to us by nature, as we can not be deprived of it either by the bustle and confusion of a town or by the important duties that attach to our existence. Believe me, my L., that this observation has been completely verified by me since I last saw you, for although deafened by noise, and attentive to the duties of my station, yet you are the subject of my serious meditations and the object of my fervent prayers to Heaven. From the first moment of my acquaintance with you, I felt the influence of genuine affection ; but now when I reflect upon the sacrifice which you make to virtue and to feeling, by conferring your hand on me, who have nothing to boast of but an honest and upright soul, and a heart of the purest love, I feel gratitude superadded to affection for you. Indeed, I do esteem myself most rich in possessing you. The mean and sordid wretch who yields the unspeakable bliss of possessing her whom he ardently loves, may boast of his ill-acquired wealth, and display his treasures in all the pride of ostentation to the world, but who shall administer to him comfort in the hour of affliction? Whose seraph smile shall chase away the fiends which torment him? The partner of his bosom he neither esteems nor regards, and he knows nothing of the balm which tender affection

can bestow. Nature will be still true to herself; for, as your favorite Thomson expresses it,

‘Naught but love can answer love,
Or render bliss secure.’

“You express some degree of astonishment, my L., at an observation I once made to you, ‘that I would not have been willingly wealthy at the time I addressed you.’ Suffer me to repeat it. If I had been wealthy, the idea of your being actuated by prudential considerations in accepting my suit, would have internally tortured me. But I exposed to you frankly and unblushingly my situation in life, my hopes and my fears, my prospects and my dependencies, and you nobly responded. To insure to you happiness is now my only object, and whether I float or sink in the stream of fortune, you may be assured of this, that I shall never cease to love you. Forgive me for these remarks, which I have been irresistibly led to make.

“Colonel Christian will deliver you this letter, together with the two first volumes of the ‘Forest of Montabano.’ I do not trouble him with the last two volumes, for fear of incommoding him, and because I shall be at your father’s on Wednesday evening, if the business before the Legislature be not very important. You will feel much sympathy for the unfortunate Angelina, and admiration for the character of good Father Patrick. Frederick is inexplicable until the last volume is read.

“Again suffer me to assure you of my constant esteem and affection, and believe me to be yours most faithfully,

“JOHN TYLER.

“To Miss LETITIA CHRISTIAN, New Kent.”

It was the “old story.” Although this letter does not, like some, overrun with gush, in the main it is like all other love-letters. As Mr. Tyler says, “nature” supplies the faculty, and nothing can turn it

aside. It has always been substantially the same. Love has found its angel, its seraph, in all conditions of life, many of them strange, incongruous, and inexplicable enough. This letter is copied from Mrs. Laura Carter Holloway's "Ladies of the White House," and I am indebted to the same source for much else concerning Mrs. Tyler and other women who filled the position of mistress in the "Executive Mansion" at Washington. In a letter to this writer Mrs. Letitia Semple said:—

"My mother's mother was Mary Brown, of the same family with the late Judge John Brown, of Williamsburg, and Professor Dabney Brown, of William and Mary College, the former of whom finally moved to Kentucky, and the latter more recently to California; and with that of the Hon. James Halyburton, late Judge of the United States District Court of Virginia, and of the Hon. John M. Grêgory, late Judge of the Henrico Circuit and Governor of Virginia; and as to the late Judge Christian, of the Peninsular Circuit and of the General Court of Virginia, the first was her son and the last her cousin; as are also the present Drs. William and Edward Warren, formerly of Edenton, North Carolina, whither they moved from New Kent, in Virginia, but now of Baltimore."

During the time Mr. Tyler was governor of Virginia Mrs. Tyler resided with him in Richmond, and performed gracefully and acceptably the duties of a station for which she was not naturally fitted, and which she would not have chosen for herself. Only on two or three occasions did she visit Washington, spending but one winter there during Mr. Tyler's long service in Congress. She had received a good

education, and, although endowed with an unusual number of qualities which would have made her a favorite in society, would have gained for her the golden opinions of everybody, she was wholly void of aspirations to shine. She shrank from unnecessary public attention, sought no notoriety as a wit or beauty, but was contented with the honorable advancement of her husband. While she was, in the common way of speaking, a domestic woman, and, above all things, was attached to her home and its extensive interests and duties, she was possessed, in a remarkable degree, of those uncommon traits which made her aspire to elevate and beautify home and surround it with the most refined and attractive conditions of life. Domestic in the case of this exemplary and noble woman embraced the graces of the most careful and refined culture, unfortunately not always conditions of life, no matter how it is directed or however favorable its surroundings.

Although Mrs. Tyler was in feeble health, and otherwise, by her naturally refined and elevated tastes unfit for social folly and hollow public ceremonies, it may be doubted whether John Tyler had, at the time of entering upon the Presidency—including Daniel Webster and all the rest of them—an adviser so safe, true, and worthy to be relied upon as this wise and good woman. The White House has had many a far more fashionable, fussy, world-wise, and fame-loving mistress, but perhaps never one more sincere, refined, really admirable, and lovely than this wife of John Tyler.

It is said that when Mr. Tyler heard of the death of General Harrison he called his children about him, and thus addressed them :—

“To you, Priscilla and Elizabeth, it is, I trust, scarcely necessary to say that, as upon you will presently devolve the duty of presiding at the White House, you should be equal and untiring in your affabilities to all; and you should remember that nothing betrays a little soul so much as the exhibition of airs or assumptions under any circumstances. My sons, too, must not forget the saying of the ancient hero, who desired his family, instead of abandoning themselves to exultation for his triumph, to bear in mind that in the next battle he might be beaten. True nobleness of soul is only evinced in never suffering station to tempt us into a forgetfulness of ourselves, and of what we owe to others. In short, my sons and daughters, whatever you say or do, act with reference to the day which is so close at hand, when I must return to plain John Tyler; and may you never, as the President's family, either in thought, word, or deed, do aught which you will regret to be told of hereafter, when you shall be nothing higher than plain John Tyler's children.”

These are noble sentiments, and very well illustrate the general spirit of Mr. Tyler. The Priscilla mentioned here was the wife of his son Robert, and the daughter of Thomas Abthorpe Cooper, the English tragedian, and who had herself appeared on the stage as an actress a few times, and once for several nights in Washington City. She was quite an accomplished, attractive, vivacious, good little woman; but too frivolous and girlish to give much dignity to the position she was about to fill. Her first child had the good fortune to be born at the White House;

and she had the good sense to name it Letitia Christian, in honor of her mother-in-law, to whom she was greatly devoted, as must have been everybody else who knew her.

Mr. Tyler's own children then living were Mary, Robert, John, Letitia, Elizabeth, Alice, and Tazewell. Mary married Henry Lightfoot Jones, and left several children, two of whom fought in the Rebel army. Robert was a lawyer, and for many years practiced his profession in Philadelphia. He was a fine public speaker, and a man of some ability. When the Rebellion broke out he went to Virginia, and was appointed Register for the Confederacy. After the war he settled in Montgomery, Alabama, and there for some time edited a newspaper. He died in 1878. John was Mr. Tyler's private secretary during the Presidency, and for many years subsequently. He also entered the Confederate service, and ranked as a major at the time of its collapse. He is now a widower with one child, and is in the employment of the United States revenue service, located at Yorktown, Virginia. It was designed that he should write a history of his father's Administration, and with this in view he was mentioned in his father's will as one of his literary executors. But this task he has been unable to fulfill. Letitia married James Semple; Elizabeth married William Waller at the White House. Alice and Tazewell were then children. Alice married the Rev. Henry M. Dennison, an Episcopal clergyman of some note, and left one child. Tazewell studied medicine, and was a surgeon

in the Confederate army. He married Miss Anne Bridges, and died in California, where he had gone to live, in 1874.

All of Mr. Tyler's children and children's children followed him in the cause of the South. Even Elizabeth's son, William, left West Point when the war began, and was married to a young sister of Jefferson Davis's second wife. One of her sons was killed in the war.

Two or three years before entering the White House Mrs. Tyler had been a sufferer from paralysis, and only on one or two occasions did she appear in the public ceremonies, her young daughter, Elizabeth, and Mrs. Robert Tyler, chiefly the latter, performing the duties of her station. She gradually declined after going to Washington; and finally, at eight o'clock on Saturday night, September 10, 1842, she died. For the next two days the President's house was in mourning; on Monday afternoon, at four o'clock, Mr. Hawley, of the Episcopal Church, of which she had long been a member, preached a sermon at the White House, and on the morning of the 13th the President, with relatives and friends, started with the remains to Virginia, for interment in the family burial-ground of the Christians, in New Kent County.

Of her death Mr. Gales, of "The National Intelligencer," wrote:—

"This estimable lady was, in life, more truly than we can represent her in words, a wife, a mother, and a Christian—loving and confiding to her husband, gentle and

affectionate to her children, kind and charitable to the needy and afflicted. Deeply impressed in early life by her highly respected and pious parents with the truthful and heavenly doctrines of the meek Jesus, in all her actions, with whatever sphere in life connected, self was forgotten by her, and the good of others alone remembered, which won for her, wherever she was known, the love and esteem of all."

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CHAPTER XXIII.

THE HOME OF THE TYLERS—THE WHITE HOUSE—ITS
CHARMING MISTRESS—A MODEL FAMILY.

BUT few public men were more domestic in their tendencies or more attached to home and family than John Tyler. Yet among all the disparaging statements as bearing directly or indirectly upon Mr. Tyler, I have found none so bad, or none which strike me so unfavorably, as the following made by John Tyler, Jr., the President's favorite son, in a letter to Mrs. Holloway:—

"All the education and learning I possess that I esteem valuable and worthy to be treasured, I may say I derived from my mother. It was through her teachings that I became finally impressed with the vast ethical superiority of the internal over the external relations attendant upon our existence, and with the preference that should be accorded to the spiritualistic system of philosophy over the materialistic system; the first being that of Christ, and the last that of 'the world, the flesh, and the devil.'"

The facts in the case as to President Tyler do not justify this implication, which is really as far from the truth as a vast number of the statements bearing on his life and conduct. It was, perhaps, the mere sentiment of a moment, however unbecoming it was in the man whom Mrs. Ellet calls the most handsome of his day in Washington City.

Is it possible that John Tyler, a President of the United States, a man with some as bright and admirable qualities as were ever possessed, with all his knowledge of men and their thoughts and principles, and having withal the same religious views as his excellent wife, never gave his children anything worthy to be treasured? Have distinguished and so-called great men never been worth anything to their sons? Have they not, in the majority of cases, been the secret prompters of the very spirit which impelled the mother, as well as the authors of the matter of her teachings? What boy of wise and true parents, out of his moments of chivalrous affection, will not be able to trace his principles, undying principles, reaching up into life, building character for eternity, to his father; and the gentler traits of benevolence and love, equally necessary, to the life of his mother, and more to her example than her mere precept? This wholly uncalled-for, chivalrous affectation is as contemptible as it is thoughtless and unintentionally insincere and hurtful.

This notice of Mrs. Tyler may close with some extracts from letters of her children to Mrs. Holloway. From Williamsburg, Virginia, soon after her marriage, Mrs. Robert Tyler (Priscilla Cooper) wrote to her relative:—

“You know how entirely charming Mr. Tyler’s father is, for you saw him at my wedding in Bristol, but you can not imagine the tenderness and kindness with which he received me, his ‘new daughter,’ as he called me. Mr. Tyler’s mother is very much as I imagined her, from his description. She must have been very beautiful in her youth, for she is still

beautiful now, in her declining years and wretched health. Her skin is as smooth and soft as a baby's; she has sweet, loving black eyes, and her features are delicately molded; besides this, her feet and hands are perfect; and she is gentle and graceful in her movements, with a most peculiar air of native refinement about every thing she says and does. She is the most entirely unselfish person you can imagine. I do not believe she ever thinks of herself. Her whole thought and affections are wrapped up in her husband and children; and I thank God I am numbered with those dear children, and can partake with them in the blessing of her love. May he give me grace to be ever a kind and loving daughter to her! The house is very large and very airy and pleasant, fronting on a large lawn and surrounded by a most beautiful garden. The parlor is comfortably furnished, and has that home-like and occupied look which is so nice. The prettiest thing in it, to my taste, though very old-fashioned, is the paper upon the walls, which depicts in half-life-size pictures the adventures of Telemachus on Calypso's enchanted isle. Telemachus is very handsome, Calypso and her nymphs as graceful as possible, and old Mentor as disagreeable and stern as all Mentors usually are. I find something new in the paper every day, and love to study it.

"The dining room is opposite the parlor, across a broad passage kept too bright and shiny almost to step upon, and is also a very spacious room with a great deal of old family silver adorning the side-board, and some good pictures upon the walls. There are two other rooms behind the parlor and the dining-room, one of which is used as a sitting and reading room; for it is a double house, flanked by offices in the yard, in which the library is kept, and one of which is used for law and business purposes by Mr. Tyler's father and himself. The room in the main dwelling furthest removed and most retired is 'the chamber,' as the bedroom of the mistress of the house is always called in Virginia.

"This last, to say nothing of others, or of the kitchen, store-rooms, and pantries, is a most quiet and comfortable retreat, with an air of repose and sanctity about it; at least I feel it so, and often seek refuge here from the company and beaux,

and laughing and talking of the other parts of the house; for here mother, with a smile of welcome on her sweet, calm face, is always found seated in her large arm-chair, with a small stand by her side, which holds her Bible and her prayer-book—the only books she ever reads now—with her knitting usually in her hands, always ready to sympathize with me in any little home-sickness which may disturb me, and to ask me questions about all you dear ones in Bristol, because she knows I want to talk about you. Notwithstanding her very delicate health, mother attends to and regulates all the household affairs, and all so quietly that you can't tell when she does it. All the clothes for the children and for the servants are cut out under her immediate eye, and all the sewing is personally superintended by her. All the cake, jellies, custards—and we indulge largely in them—emanate from her, yet you see no confusion, hear no bustle, but only meet the agreeable result.

“All Mr. Tyler's sisters are lovely and sweet. Sister Mary (Mrs. Jones), who is the oldest of all, I have already introduced you to in my letter from Charles City, where she resides at ‘Woodburn,’ one of the plantations, or ‘farms,’ as they are called here, of her husband, and where she so happily entertained us recently. Next comes Letitia (Mrs. Semple), married last February. She is very handsome and full of life and spirits. She has a place called ‘Cedar Hill,’ some distance from Williamsburg, in New Kent County, but is now here on a visit. Then comes Elizabeth, a very great belle here, though she is not yet seventeen. She is remarkably sweet and pretty, with beautiful eyes and complexion, and her hair curled down her neck.

“John, who is next to Mr. Tyler in age, and who was at my wedding, and therefore needs no description, is not here now; but he and his wife will spend next winter with his father, as he still attends the law department and higher scientific courses of William and Mary College, as it is termed in accordance with the original charter of King William and Queen Mary, although it is now and has been for many years a university. I have not seen her yet, but hear that she is very beautiful.

“The two younger children, Alice and Tazewell, make up

the family. . . . The children, with all the rest of the family, seem very, very fond of me, but you must not suppose that all this affection and kindness makes me vain. It is very comforting and sweet, but I know they all love me from no merit of my own, but from the devotion the whole family feel for Mr. Tyler, who is idolized by his parents, and profoundly loved and respected by his brothers and sisters."

In the following quotation from a letter of John Tyler, Jr., to Mrs. Holloway, he very materially changes the unguarded tone into which his enthusiasm for the memory of his mother had formerly led him:—

"It was never the habit of our family, during my mother's life, to make 'a to-do' about anything personal to ourselves; and noisy, fussy, and arrogant assumption and pretension were always regarded by us as alike indecorous, opposed to good taste, and violative of self-respect. The introduction of such deportment in our midst is altogether at variance with our ideas of decency and propriety. We have generally considered it best to leave it to others to speak of our merits while living, and to assign to their proper place the virtuous memories of our dead.

"Neither my mother nor my father would ever permit in the family the slightest expression of ancestral pride, though sedulous in impressing upon the minds of all around them the more elevated sentiments and noble actions of their progenitors, seeking, as it were, to sanctify, through the aid and quality of veneration, the recollection of things worthy of imitation. We were especially taught, apart from the common things of everyday life, and the usual lessons of diligence and industry, that honor and fame attach themselves to no particular condition of life; that mere exterior circumstances can not confer either real character or true respectability; that a palace can not add to, nor a log-cabin detract from, substantial worth; that a Christianized heart; . . . a cultivated mind; the refinement of the sentiments, the feelings, the affections; the conscientious performance of duty; . . . a reverence for the

laws, together with gentle manners and delicate courtesies, were incomparably preferable to wealth, official dignities, and worldly displays."

On the last day of January, 1842, in the famous East Room in the President's House, Mr. Tyler's daughter, Elizabeth, was married; and Mrs. Robert Tyler thus wrote of the affair:—

"WASHINGTON, February, 1842.

"Lizzie has had quite a grand wedding, although the intention was that it should be quiet and private. This, under the circumstances, though, was found impossible. The guests consisted of Mrs. Madison, the members of the Cabinet with their wives and daughters, the Foreign Ministers near the Government, and some few personal friends, outside of the family and their relatives.

"Lizzie looked surpassingly lovely in her wedding dress and long blonde-lace veil, her face literally covered with blushes and dimples. She behaved remarkably well, too; any quantity of compliments were paid to her. . . .

"Our dear mother was down stairs on this occasion for the first time, in so large a circle, since she has been in Washington. She gained by comparison with all the fine ladies around her. I felt proud of her, in her perfectly faultless yet unostentatious dress, her face shaded by the soft, fine lace of her cap, receiving, in her sweet, gentle, self-possessed manner, all the important people who were led up and presented to her. She was far more attractive to me in her appearance and bearing than any other lady in the room, and I believe such was the general impression. Somebody says, 'The highest order of manner is that which combines dignity with simplicity;' and this just describes mother's manner, the charm of which, after all, proceeds from her entire forgetfulness of self, and the wish to make those around her happy."

This good little woman left the White House to live in Philadelphia, soon after the death of Mrs. Tyler, and Mrs. Semple filled her place until Mr.

Tyler was again married. Of herself and her life at the White House Mrs. Robert Tyler wrote at various times to her sister. In April, 1841, she wrote:—

“What wonderful changes take place, my dearest M. ! Here am I, *née* Priscilla Cooper (*‘nez retroussé,’* you will perhaps think), actually living in, and, what is more, presiding at, the White House ! I look at myself, like the little old woman, and exclaim : ‘Can this be I ?’ I have not had one moment to myself since my arrival ; and the most extraordinary thing is that I feel as if I had been used to live here always, and receive the Cabinet, ministers, the diplomatic corps, the heads of the army and navy, etc., etc., with a facility which astonishes me !

“‘Some achieve greatness—some are born to it.’ I am plainly born to it. I do really possess a degree of modest assurance that surprises me more than it does any one else. I am complimented on every side ; my hidden virtues are coming out. I am considered *‘charmante’* by the Frenchmen, ‘lovely’ by the Americans, and ‘really quite nice, you know,’ by the English.”

In May she again wrote to her sister:—

“We have had a Cabinet dinner, and I have disgraced myself with father forever. Just in the full tide of successful experiment, at the moment the ices were being put upon the table, everybody in a good humor, and all going ‘merry as a marriage bell,’ what should I do but grow deathly pale, and for the first time in my life, fall back in a fainting fit ! Mr. Webster, who was sitting next me, picked me up in his arms, and took me away from the table ; and Mr. Tyler, with his usual impetuosity, deluged us both with ice-water, ruining my lovely new dress, and, I am afraid, producing a decided coolness between himself and the Secretary of State. I had to be taken to my room, and poor Mr. Webster had to be shaken off, dried, and brushed, before he could resume his place at the table ! What a *contretemps* !”

In the same month this sprightly little woman wrote :—

"I occupy poor General Harrison's room. I had no superstitious feeling upon the subject, and it is as pleasant as possible. The nice, comfortable bedroom, with its handsome furniture and curtains, its luxurious arm-chairs, and all its belongings, I enjoy, I believe, more than anything else in the establishment. The pleasantest part of my life is when I can shut myself up here with my precious baby. You ought to see her; she is too lovely! The greatest trouble I anticipate is paying visits. There was a doubt at first whether I must visit in person or send cards; but I asked Mrs. Madison's advice upon the subject, and she says: 'Return all my visits by all means.' Mrs. Bache says so too. So three days in the week I am to spend three hours a day driving from one street to another in this city of magnificent distances. The victim for this sacrifice is to be adorned in a white chip bonnet, trimmed with moss rose-buds, from Lawson's in New York. . . . I know you will think I ought to give you my impressions of these 'intellectual giants,' instead of talking of dresses, and bonnets, etc. The fact is when you meet them in every-day life, you forget they are great men at all, and just find them the most charming companions in the world, talking the most delightful nonsense, especially the almost awful looking Mr. Webster, who entertains me with most charming gossip."

January 1, 1842, after passing through the trying ordeal of New-Year at the White House, she wrote :—

"The first of January, eighteen hundred and forty-two, is past, never to return; and I am nearly on the point of going off with it. I never felt so tired in all my life, as I am this evening, standing up for three hours, and shaking hands with I don't know how many thousand people; such big fists as some of the people had, and such hearty shakes as they gave my poor little hand too! One great hearty countryman gave me a clutch and a shake I almost expired under, but I could not help laughing when Fletcher Webster whispered to me, 'When taken, to be well shaken!'"

In the same month, she again wrote:—

“I am afraid you poor Alabamian plebeians will expire with envy when I tell you that a real live English lord was among the guests at the President’s house last week; Lord Morpeth now, Earl of Carlisle that is to be, with the blood of all the Howards coursing through his noble veins! Yes, he dined here; and had the honor of handing me in to dinner, and sat next me for three hours! I can’t tell you what we talked about; I do n’t think either of us made a remark worth remembering. He attacked our ‘Americanisms’ (as most Englishmen do), especially the use of the word ‘lovely’ when applied to amiable women, even if they were shockingly ugly. I contended it was not used by well-bred Americans, whereas ‘nice person’ in England covered every degree of excellence in mind and body, and was used by every one. He laughed, and could not contradict me. He is not handsome, *tout au contraire!* not *distingué* looking; his face is red, his hair is light, his manner awkward. Indeed, instead of that ‘composure of aristocracy’ which I anticipated in a scion of one of the noblest English houses, I found even a very fidgety manner. He seemed very amiable and unaffected though, and I felt entirely at my ease talking nonsense to him.”

After meeting Charles Dickens she wrote to her sister:—

“I have seen him twice; once in the morning, when I had him ‘all to myself,’ and then again at the levee in the evening. He is not at all romantic-looking, rather thickset; his face, of course, most intelligent and bright, but his dress does not suit me; he wears rather too much jewelry, and is thoroughly English in his appearance, and not the best English. At the levee he was accompanied by his wife, quite a sweet-looking, plump woman, tastefully dressed though, and more English-looking than Boz himself. Poor fellow! He seemed horribly bored by the crowd passing around him. What think you? He and Washington Irving were both speaking to me at the same time. I am charmed with Washington Irving. He took me into the dinner which father gave him.”

Among her last letters from the White House, as its mistress, she wrote in 1843 :—

“You say you hear Bertrand is to come to this country. My dear, he has come. Come, seen, and conquered; he has come, seen me, and been conquered! The Marshal arrived during the President's absence in Virginia, and the whole duty of entertaining him devolved upon me. To be sure, Mr. Tyler is here; but he is only the Prince Consort, you know. He arrived on Saturday, and sent the same evening to ask if I would receive him, and at what hour he should call. I appointed eight o'clock, it being then past seven. I immediately sent for the officers of the Cabinet, and was surrounded by them when the old hero arrived, accompanied by his suite. He bowed to the very ground, and I courtesied quite as low. I can not convey to you an idea of how charmingly I received him. The hour he remained he spent in complimenting me in French and English, rather jumbled together, while I returned his compliments in the same eccentric mixture of languages. At last, after a flourishing speech, squeezing my hand, with a second low bow over it, he departed, followed by his suite, each first making a profound obeisance. I could not resist the impulse, and as the last mustachioed Frenchman left the room, I turned a pirouette upon one foot on the rug, and then, dropping a low courtesy, said: ‘I beg the Cabinet's pardon.’ Whereat Mr. Tyler was exceedingly wrathful, though every one else said it was the ‘sweetest thing’ I had done the whole evening.

“The Marshal was to leave the next morning (Sunday), but I sent him an invitation for Monday evening. You should see the note of acceptance he wrote—I have it in my book of autographs. He ‘had intended leaving;’ my ‘gracieuse invitation’ was not to be resisted. I had but a short time in which to effect a great deal; but my usual administrative powers were called into action, and I succeeded in doing all I wished to do. I sent out two hundred invitations to the ‘*crème de la crème*’ of Washington society. At eight o'clock my party was assembled, formed of the very prettiest girls and nicest people I could collect. All the officers of the army and navy appeared in their uniforms;

the diplomatic corps in full court costume. I stood at the head of the blue center room under the window. As the Marshal arrived and walked through the hall the band struck up the *Marseillaise* Hymn. The guests fell back on each side as he entered the room, leaving a broad path for Bertrand to advance to where Josephine—I mean to where I stood, surrounded by the Cabinet. To describe the reverences he made, followed by his son and each of his suite in turn, would be vain. I returned them with grandmother's old-fashioned curtsies, such as must have existed in the days of the Empire. Soon after his arrival the quadrilles commenced. I only danced twice; once to open the ball with Count Bertrand, the Marshal's son, and again, at his request, with his aid-de-camp—two young Frenchmen composed of full pantaloons and mustaches. For the rest of the evening my guests demanded my attention. No party ever went off better.

"Father (President Tyler), with his usual kindness, had given me a *carte-blanche* before he left, and my supper was splendid (it is so easy to entertain at other people's expense). The prettiest things on the table were two pyramids composed of pomegranates with the skins peeled off, and Malaga grapes. They looked like rubies and emeralds. . . .

"As the Marshal led me in to supper, he seemed completely overcome, and putting his hand upon his heart, said: 'O! Madame, all zis for me?' The only *contretemps* that occurred was, that I gave him, with a smile, a French sugar-plum, without observing the picture on it, which I afterwards observed, to my horror, to be that of an ass! I hope the Marshal did not think it personal. The old gentleman did not leave until all the guests had departed, and then made me a long speech of adieu, saying at the end: 'I sink *vous êtes charmante*, Madame; I sink you are very good woman, and all your people must lof you. Adieu, Madame, I shall nevere forget you!' Then saluting my hand in the most chivalrous, French, respectful, delicious manner, he departed, and left me alone in my glory."

I must again bring this little woman to testify concerning the family into which she had married.

If ever a mother-in-law got her deserts from a daughter-in-law, the good and gentle wife of President Tyler was that woman.

In October, 1842, she wrote:—

“As you know we were summoned from Brooklyn by here after her death, and even after the funeral service had mother’s last illness. We started immediately, but only arrived been performed. Nothing can exceed the loneliness of this large and gloomy mansion, hung with black, its walls echoing only sighs and groans. Of course their mother’s death was a most agonizing blow to the whole family. My poor husband suffered dreadfully when he was told that mother’s eyes were constantly turned to the door watching for him. He had left Washington to bring me and the children at her request. She was very fond of me, and I loved her dearly. She had every thing about her to awaken love. She was beautiful to the eye, even in her ill-health; her complexion was as clear as an infant’s, her figure perfect, and her hands and feet were the most delicate I ever saw. She was refined and gentle in every thing she said and did; and, above all, a pure and spotless Christian. Indeed she was just my beau-ideal of a perfect gentlewoman. The devotion of father and her sons to her was affecting; I do not think I ever saw her enter the room where they were assembled, that they did not, all three, spring up, to lead her to a chair, to arrange her footstool, and caress and pet her.”

It must have been a woman of more than ordinary qualities who could have inspired this devotion, even among a people of chivalrous leisure. Notwithstanding the disappointment of the Whigs, and pretty much everybody else in Mr. Tyler’s course, society matters at the Capital ran smoothly enough during his Presidency; and perhaps no occupant of the White House was more popular with the unpolitical who had the disposition to appreciate a plain, well-

disposed and benevolent man. Of his habits at the White House Ben Perley Poore wrote in 1880:—

“President Tyler, who was fifty-one years of age when he took possession of the Executive Mansion, was somewhat above the medium height, and of slender figure, with long limbs and great activity of movement. His thin auburn hair turned white during his term of office, his nose was large and prominent, his eyes were of a bluish-gray, his lips were thin and his cheeks sunken. His manners were those of the old school of Virginia gentlemen, and he always invited visitors with whom he was acquainted to accompany him to the sideboard in his dining-room and take a glass of wine, or something stronger. The ceremonious etiquette established at the White House by Van Buren vanished, and the President lived precisely as he had on his plantation, attended by his old family slaves. When Healey, the artist, was invited to reside at the White House while he was copying Stuart's portrait of Washington for Louis Philippe of France, he was forcibly struck with the absence of all ceremony. The first day of the artist's sojourn, he accompanied the family to the drawing-room, after dinner, and then said, with a profound bow: ‘Mr. President, with your permission I will retire to my work.’ ‘My good fellow,’ replied Mr. Tyler, ‘do just what you please.’”

CHAPTER XXIV.

JULIA GARDINER TYLER—A NEW QUEEN AT THE COURT.

THIS chapter was written especially for this volume by a Virginian, a descendant of a fine old family, who reveres its name and character.

Julia Gardiner Tyler, widow of ex-President Tyler, was born on Gardiner's Island, in the State of New York. Gardiner's Island was the place of the first English settlement in the Empire State, and is situated on the coast of Long Island. This settlement was made in 1639 by Lieutenant Lion Gardiner, the commandant of Fort Saybrooke, in Connecticut. Gardiner's Island was purchased by him from the Montauket Indians, and has ever since been owned by his lineal descendants, according to the ancient custom of primogeniture and entail. Lion Gardiner's first child, David Gardiner, was the first child of white parents ever born in Connecticut, and Elizabeth, born September 14, 1641, third child of Lion Gardiner, was the first child of English parents born in the Empire State. The island is now in the possession of Samuel Gardiner, tenth proprietor from Lion Gardiner. Mrs. Tyler's great-grandfather was Colonel Abraham Gardiner, younger brother of one of these proprietors, and his son was Captain Abraham Gardiner, father of Hon. David Gardiner, father of Mrs. Tyler.

David Gardiner, Mrs. Tyler's father, was a man of most elegant and dignified manners, of scrupulous neatness, and of splendid physique. At one time he served in

the New York Legislature, and attracted, till his death, the most distinguished respect.

On her mother's side, Mrs. Tyler was descended from Sir Lachlan, High Chief of McLean, who perished during the eighteenth century, bravely fighting for the cause of the Pretender at Culloden. At his death his son Michael McLachlan was but a child. Growing up he found that all his estates were confiscated, and recognized the necessity of labor and energy. Early in life he went to the West Indies, where he acquired a fortune after many years, through merchandising. When quite an old man he removed to New York and married Miss Jane Chambers, and finally died, leaving two young children, Alexander and Juliana. Alexander died at twenty-two, and all his property became that of Juliana. While still a girl of fifteen she met David Gardiner, a young lawyer of New York. The result was a marriage, and Juliana McLachlan became Mrs. David Gardiner. Some time after his marriage Mr. Gardiner gave up the practice of law and rented Gardiner's Island. Here Julia, his third child was born.

Mr. Gardiner, on leaving the island, passed over to East Hampton, on the Long Island shore, very near the island. As Gardiner's Island is the oldest English settlement, East Hampton is the oldest English town in New York. It is beautifully situated, and the beach is one of the grandest in America. The finest fish abound in the waters, and the people still preserve in their ways and actions many of the old ideas and traditions. Here Julia Gardiner passed her girlhood attending the schools in town. But her best and most valuable instructions were obtained from her father, who never tired of imparting knowledge to his children, or of impressing upon them the necessity of the most elegant and high-toned accomplishments. Possessed, through his wife, of ample means he considered the best disposition he could make of the funds was to bestow them upon their children's refinement and cultivation.

Having availed herself fully of the advantages offered in East Hampton, Julia Gardiner was sent by her parents to a fashionable boarding-school in New York City, where her education was rounded off by all the facilities and advantages open to the most favored young ladies. Finally, as a finishing touch to the education of herself and her sister Margaret, her parents decided to take the two to Europe, where they might see for themselves the historic scenes which they had read of and heard of from their childhood up. They first visited the British Isles; and spent a long time traveling by carriage through England, Ireland, and Scotland. They next passed over to France, visited Paris, and saw all the wonders of the city of fashion and pleasure. Then, by easy journeys, they visited Switzerland, saw all the wonders of the scenery of Italy; and finally, after two years' absence, returned home to make their *début* in society. Julia had large gray eyes, raven hair, and the clearest olive complexion, and seemed to attract the most eminent men from the time she entered society. Many were the poetic tributes, proving her attractions, published in the papers, and sent her through the mails by ardent admirers. Among the suitors for her hand were venerable judges, grave senators, and dignified governors.

Washington was very gay during the session of Congress, and thither Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner repaired to enable their daughters to properly shine in that field for which they were so well qualified. At one of the receptions she attended they met the President of the United States, who immediately, in the midst of politics and business and all, lost his heart. From that day he paid unremitting suit to Miss Gardiner. This suit was successful after the death of her father, the Hon. David Gardiner, who, as is well remembered, was killed on board the steamer *Princeton* by the explosion of the great gun of Commodore Stockton.

On June 26, 1844, Mr. Tyler married the bereaved daughter of David Gardiner, at the Church of the Ascension, in New York City. "The wedded pair embarked on board the steamer *Essex* amidst a shower of salutes. During the firing from one of the Mexican vessels in the harbor a perfect aerial ring appeared, soared upward for some time, then gracefully sank till its rim touched the water, when it broke and vanished." This was the only instance where a President of the United States married while at the helm of Government. Mrs. Tyler, being thus suddenly called to do the honors of the White House, performed them with such success as to entitle the times to the name of the Cavalier Reign. "Mrs. Madison was always included in the list of the invited guests;" and young as Mrs. Tyler was, she did not fail to remember what was due to old age and the honors of past position. With the close of the Cavalier Reign began the Puritan Reign of Mrs. Polk.

When Mr. Tyler's term expired, he carried his wife to his native county of Charles City, in the State of Virginia. Here he had recently purchased a place on the banks of the James, which he named "Sherwood Forest;" and here for seventeen years Mrs. Tyler passed in the society of her husband the most happy existence, surrounded by every luxury and receiving every attention. A family of children soon grew up around her, the youngest of whom, Pearl, was but a baby in arms when her husband died. A most refined and elevated society existed about her in visiting distance. Across the river, opposite to "Sherwood," were the Harrisons, one of the oldest, most distinguished, and most wealthy families in Virginia. Their place, known in history as "Brandon," was the seat of the most open-handed hospitality. At "Westover," another historic place, lived the Seldens; and at "Shirley" lived the Carters. But dark clouds were gathering; and she whose life hitherto had been

like that of a bird was to know the darkness of sorrow, and the gloom of trials the most severe.

The jealousy between the North and South, which had been growing blacker and blacker, assumed, in 1861, the most alarming character. South Carolina passed her ordinance of secession in December, 1860; and the whole country was filled with the most angry criminations and recriminations. Virginia, the mother of States and statesmen, at the earnest suggestion and through the earnest efforts of the patriot John Tyler, called a Peace Conference of the States, to devise methods for the restoration of harmony and peace. The effort unhappily failed; and Virginia, forced to the alternative of fighting with the North or fighting with the South, chose the latter, and Mr. Tyler was selected a member of the provisional Congress of the Confederate States, soon after to be elected a member of the permanent Congress. It was while he was discharging his duties as Congressman that the first great bereavement befell Mrs. Tyler. She was with her children at the plantation on the river when she dreamed she saw her husband, who for some time past had been in feeble health, lying on a bed in the aspect of death. Alarmed by this manifestation, she took the steamer and went up to Richmond next day with her baby. On getting out of the hack at the Exchange Hotel she met her husband, looking about the same as ever. He laughed very heartily at her when she told him her dream, and took the baby in his arms and played with it. That night, while sipping tea at supper, he fell from his chair, and had to be carried to his room. At first the symptoms were not thought serious; but next Friday night, at quarter past twelve o'clock, he suddenly breathed his last.

Mrs. Tyler was thus left by her husband at the most critical time. The peninsula of Virginia was already filled with troops, and the war-cloud came thundering up the river. During the anxieties caused by the President's

death and the dangers of war, Mrs. Tyler fell dangerously ill of typhoid-pneumonia. For a long time her life was despaired of, but careful nursing at the hands of attentive neighbors brought her around again, and enabled her in the summer of 1862 to repair to her mother's house in New York. By the kindness of General George B. McClellan she went by flag-of-truce boat to Fortress Monroe, where her mother was awaiting her. Under her mother's roof on Staten Island she was safe, but she could not view the destruction of her home in the South except with great sorrow. It was necessary for her to return and have the will of her husband probated. She was refused permission to pass through the lines, and so was forced to run the blockade from Bermuda to Wilmington, North Carolina. This she successfully did after numerous hardships and dangers.

In 1863 a second great calamity befell her. Her mother died, and for several years afterwards she had to experience all the trials and embarrassments of a long will suit, in which her Southern affiliations were made to play a great and prejudicial part against her interests. After carrying the case from court to court with indefatigable industry and determination, with the assistance of her lawyers, Hon. William M. Evarts and Hon. Edwards Pierrepont, she was ultimately successful; and obtained complete possession of the property left her by her mother's will. Unfortunately, however, her property, which consisted principally of real estate, depreciated very much in value; and in 1872 Mrs. Tyler returned to the old homestead in Virginia. In the meantime, in 1871, she was subjected to another severe trial in the loss of her oldest daughter, Julia, who married William H. Spencer, of New York, in 1869.

By unselfishly giving her children all the advantages of education in her power, Mrs. Tyler became very much reduced in circumstances. The Congress of the United States nobly came to her aid in this state of affairs, and, in

consideration of the great services of her husband, unani-
mously bestowed upon her a pension which has placed her
in a much more easy and independent position.

In this hasty sketch little more remains but to allude
to the letter Mrs. Tyler wrote in reply to the Duchesses
of Sutherland, Argyle, and Bedford, Viscountess Palmer-
ston, and others. These ladies addressed a letter to the
ladies of the United States, urging them to effect the
abolition of slavery. Mrs. Tyler, then living in retire-
ment at "Sherwood Forest," wrote a spirited reply, which
was copied in all the papers, and favorably commented on.
A distinguished statesman of our country said, in allusion
to this letter, that most authors became famous in the world
of letters by long-continued exertion, but Mrs. Tyler secured
reputation and victory with a single stroke of the pen.

"Sherwood Forest" was much injured by the war.
When Mrs. Tyler returned to the county of Charles City
she found a perfect desert everywhere—fences all burned,
furniture and stock all destroyed, and even the records of
the ancient court-house carried off by vandal hands. The
work of recuperation has been necessarily slow; but the
Peninsula is slowly picking up, and one of these days will
probably recover all its former aspect of wealth and cheer-
fulness. Yorktown and Williamsburg and historic James-
town are all situated upon this classic peninsula, which is
inclosed between the York and the James.

Though thirty-seven years have passed since her mar-
riage, Mrs. Tyler still preserves a surprisingly youthful
appearance. She has still the same pearly teeth, the same
raven black hair, and the same clear complexion. Her
large, expressive eyes still preserve all their former ani-
mation and luster, and her conversational powers have
increased in scope and variety through her great expe-
rience in the art of pleasing in society. She has still the
same queenly air, and her manners are such as fill with
wonder those who know her.

CHAPTER XXV.

A YEAR AT THE WHITE HOUSE—SCENES AT "SHERWOOD FOREST"—THE MISTRESS.

AFTER the explosion of the "Peacemaker" on the *Princeton*, opposite Alexandria, the body of David Gardiner was, with the others, taken to the White House, where it remained until after the funeral services. Mr. Gardiner's two daughters were of the company on the *Princeton* at the time of the catastrophe. Mr. Tyler had known them before, and Mr. Gardiner had been one of his political friends; but this event increased his interest in one of the daughters, at least; an interest which he had for some time felt.

Not a month after the explosion Henry A. Wise says that the President took him out in his carriage to talk with him about something better than politics, actually about love. This sage told the President that he supposed he had found some honored dame to grace the White House for the remainder of his term. But Mr. Tyler hooted the idea. It was a "sweet damsel," he said. Mr. Wise then advised caution, and wisely more than intimated imprudence. He told Mr. Tyler that he was past middle age, and besides his office might dazzle the eye of a damsel who would tire of the old man.

The President poohed this whim, too, stating that he was barely in his full prime; and besides that he had been fairly caught by Miss Gardiner. He was gone beyond hope. Wise, true to his name for once, at all events, argued the character of his family, the graces of his own daughters, the chances of discord and unhappiness in a family united and devoted, and told him that his life should be renewed in that of his children. But this inexplicable, immodest, and inconsistent thing, love, concealed from Mr. Tyler the proprieties of his situation, and the uncertain chances of the future.

On the 25th of June, 1844, President Tyler justified the *quidnuncs* by appearing unannounced in New York City, and on the following day, at the Church of the Ascension, he was married to Miss Julia Gardiner. They returned at once to Washington, leaving New York immediately after the marriage, and at the White House held a grand reception. This event stirred up considerable gossip throughout the country, it being the first instance of the marriage of a President. John Quincy Adams wrote of it thus in his Diary:—

“Captain Tyler and his bride are the laughing-stock of the city. It seems as if he was racing for a prize-banner to the nuptials of the mock-heroic, the sublime, and the ridiculous. He has assumed the war power as a prerogative, the veto power as a caprice, the appointing and dismissing power as a fund for bribery; and now, under circumstances of revolting indecency, is performing, with a young girl from New York, the old fable of January and May.”

The "Old Man Eloquent" could be severe at times, and like most other men unfortunately not always fair. But any one can readily suppose that President Tyler and his young bride would have been the laughing-stock of Washington, a city noted for folly and nonsense, when everybody knows that it is the usual custom everywhere to laugh at newly wedded people whether old or young, or well or ill matched.

I do not design arguing the propriety or impropriety of President Tyler's second marriage. But I see a very substantial reason why he should have married Miss Gardiner when he did, while he was President, if they were going to be married at all. For the loss of the short reign at the White House his daughters should not have complained. He had filled their cup of joy and ambition. And no one can deny that it was reasonable and natural that Mr. Tyler should desire that the woman whom he had selected to spend with him his declining days should also share, for a brief period, a station for which she was qualified, and which has been considered the highest and most honorable position, if not also the most to be prayed for, in all the circle of possibilities in the life of an American woman. Henry A. Wise says that Miss Gardiner had been floating about Washington in gossamer wings already, and it is not reasonable to suppose that she did not desire, in becoming the wife of Mr. Tyler, to have the opportunity to spread these wings in a way to reflect honor upon her whole after life. To have

denied her the "honor" that attaches to the "Lady of the White House" would have been unwise and wrong both to her and himself. That President Tyler's family of excellent children approved this step in him no one can believe. To them it certainly must have appeared more unnecessary and undesirable than it did to his friend Wise. No children so situated, and few any way situated, ever did or could approve heartily the marriage of a father, especially. I confess myself to feeling that an air of the disreputable attaches to second marriages, and, at all events, that they disappear as people become more true and elevated in their affections, and refined, thoughtful, and well-grounded in true wisdom. While this may be admitted, it is a fact, or an apparent fact, a thing to some extent recognized by society, whether right or wrong that what applies to and may be tolerable in men would not be so in women under similar circumstances. Although Mr. Adams seemed to regard Mr. Tyler's marriage as a disgrace to the "high" office he held, the opinion could not be sustained by the civilization of the age. But it may be readily seen, perhaps, that if Mrs. Madison, for instance, had married again, the respect that attached to her, and the attention always bestowed upon her, would have been lost in a great measure. The great part of her honor was simply the reflection from her husband. As the years passed respect for his character and memory increased, and this continued to fall upon his widow.

In the "court circles" of Washington nothing was

complete without Mrs. Madison. She was the standard of White House etiquette. When the bright little Mrs. Robert Tyler wanted to decide the course she should take on certain very important matters, she consulted Mrs. Madison. When the "great" little folks were assembled at the White House in honor of President Tyler's granddaughter, little Priscilla Cooper's child, who was too young to know what the folly meant, and who never could have remembered anything about it, Mrs. Madison was the only woman present out of the family. Even when Mrs. Polk took possession of the White House she went off to consult this oracle about matters of stupendous importance, to the whole country. Congress, too, in John Tyler's time, gave this woman the privilege of the floor of the noisy House of Representatives, a privilege given no other. How sadly different would it have been with Dolly Payne Madison had she been married again, and been lost in the shadow of Mr. Timothy Whiteside, or some such fellow! Mrs. Madison, of course, was not without some intrinsic merit. She was, however, mainly a shrine, and so regarded herself, managing all the time to be exceedingly pleasant to those who came to do homage. But with all her rare opportunities and long life, like most women (and most men, for that matter) she did no great thing, no greatly good thing, which should hand her name down to posterity, or do honor to her country. Yet, from 1837 to 1848, Mrs. Madison and John Quincy Adams were the most distinguished and revered persons in

Washington, in the order in which they are here mentioned. Even Mr. Adams did not stand wholly on his own merits (although they were enough); he was connected with the past in a way to bring with him a long line of names, honored in him by those of another age.

Mrs. Tyler's education and foreign travels especially fitted her, it was thought, for her new social position. The fashionable world was not disappointed, and under her short reign "society" was charmed by the splendor and propriety of affairs at the White House. Few mistresses of the President's Mansion conducted themselves with more dignity or with more general favor than did the young bride of Mr. Tyler.

On the 3d of March, 1845, Mr. Tyler and his family withdrew under flattering tokens of respect from the White House, and took up their residence at Fuller's (Willard's) Hotel, but shortly afterwards left for their home in Virginia, where they passed many years of quiet and happy life.

From this marriage Mr. Tyler had seven children: David Gardiner, now a lawyer of Charles City County, and the manager of his mother's affairs; John Alexander who married his relative Sarah, the daughter of Samuel B. Gardiner, proprietor of Gardiner's Island, who is an engineer by profession; Julia Gardiner who became the wife of William H. Spencer, of New York, and died in 1871, leaving one child; Lachlan, now a practicing physician of Washington City, married to Miss Powell, of Richmond; Lion

Gardiner, sometime a professor in William and Mary College, and now a lawyer by profession, and married to Annie B., daughter of St. George Tucker, of Virginia; Fitz Walter, a Virginia farmer; and Pearl, a graduate of the Catholic Academy at Georgetown.

Mr. Tyler's children of his second family were as greatly devoted to him as his first, and a similar quiet refinement pervaded his second home in Virginia as had distinguished his first. In the main he was now free from public employments and vexations. Hence he became more the controlling force of his home than he could have been, perhaps, in the time of his first wife. Before leaving the White House Mr. Tyler's hair was well sprinkled with gray, and in later years he did not change greatly in appearance. Although there were some signs of old age, a little stooping and rounding of the shoulders, he was still full six feet in height. His long Roman nose was very well adapted to his face, which did not greatly suffer from his light blue eyes which somehow managed to sparkle forth his universally kind sentiments. Among the various collections of portraits of the Presidents that of Mr. Tyler is usually found with little departure from his real features. It was not difficult to make a good picture of him. It would have been more difficult to make a poor one. In the State Library at Richmond there is a bust of him, the only one in existence. The set of Presidential faces in marble or metal is not complete.

In his retirement Mr. Tyler (the President, as his wife always called him) spent much of his time in

letter-writing, mostly however to his sons, and a few political and other friends. In public matters his interest never flagged. He stood squarely in with the Democrats, supporting and voting for the party Presidential candidates, and especially after the "Peace Conference" some of his letters, now extant, exhibit the strong sentiments which actuated the men of the extreme era of bad feeling in this country.

Mrs. Tyler strongly sympathized with him in all his views and tastes. She had hardly entered the White House when she became an enthusiastic advocate of all its measures. To her mother and friends she wrote of Texas annexation as a grand scheme in which she had become an equal partner. As the great "civil war" came on all her sympathies went with her husband and the South. She accompanied Mr. Tyler to Washington City, and seemed to be fired with grand and lofty thoughts about the importance of his mission and purpose. She espoused his moderate views of slavery, but at times appeared, like him, to be greatly attached to the institution in the South. When the war began she exhibited intensely bitter feelings against her section, and in this position had the sympathy of her mother, to whom she poured out her feelings without stint. Her letter to the Duchess of Sutherland on the all-absorbing theme stands not alone as a monument to her strength of mind and character and ability as a writer. Her letters are full of spirit and force. If Mr. Tyler had married a damsel, she matured with wonderful rapidity into a matron of extraordinary

force of character, with ability to grasp and handle the political issues of the country which few other "Ladies of the White House" ever possessed. Still she appeared to lose none of the domestic virtues, queenliness of manner, and loveliness of person which her husband prized above all things, and which aided so much in making the happy and fruitful years at Sherwood Forest. To her Mr. Tyler left the control of his property amounting before the war to about one hundred thousand dollars. His will set this property all aside for the use of her and her children, and earnestly desired that his children by the first marriage would not interfere with this arrangement as he felt that all of this would be necessary to educate his second brood and put them on in the world as well as had been done for the first. Mr. Tyler's will seemed to indicate some uneasiness and no little exactness on the thought of the possibility of his wife marrying again; but devoted to her home, her children, and the honor of her husband, Mrs. Tyler has fondly and proudly remained the widow of the tenth President of the United States. The following letters taken from the "Letters and Times of the Tylers" may serve to close this chapter while giving a vivid picture of the home and last days of John Tyler:—

TO ROBERT TYLER.

"SHERWOOD FOREST, April 17, 1850.

"MY SON,—Priscilla's last letter has tended to relieve much of my anxiety concerning you, but yet I can not feel content to let the occasion pass without urging upon you extreme caution. The weather is still fitful, and a relapse might prove

even worse than the first attack. Hereafter, as the winter approaches, you must wear thicker garments than has been usual with you, and, above all, your feet should be kept dry; I find that the great panacea against colds, rheumatism, and catarrh. Is not the exposure you encountered during the winter between Philadelphia and Bristol too severe, and does it not indicate the necessity of a translation to the city? These things are well worthy of consideration, and I hope will not be overlooked.

“How very cold the spring has been thus far! On yesterday twelve months ago our peas were in bloom, and the fruit-trees were clothed in verdure. There is now scarcely a leaf expanding. We are fifteen days later in planting corn, of which I made a fine crop for sale—2,500 bushels—but it sells so low as scarcely to remunerate. My wheat is very promising, and beginning to be talked of. The parcel procured by you is quite promising, and I hope it may prove a good addition to our stock.

“I had written thus far when I had to break off, and I now recommence my letter in the midst of a snow-storm. A snow-storm on the 17th of April! I have never known a similar occasion but once before, and that was, I think, in the year 1816, a year disastrous to the farmer, and causing extensive suffering for bread throughout the country. Corn commanded readily eight dollars for the barrel of five bushels, and in some places—Hanover, for example—ten. You perceive how strongly and with what great intensity my mind runs upon the results of agriculture. It is natural for one to think of that by which he lives. But doubt not that my mind runs chiefly and in its strongest flood upon yourself. I hope to be constantly advised of your condition. Before I drop the subject of family concerns, I must say to you that Alice is engaged to Mr. Denison. I have received a letter from him, and have replied acquiescence. He is a man of fine talents, and will make his way well in the Church should he live. Alice will do well. I should have preferred to see her in more secure circumstances, in anticipation of those contingencies to which all are subject; but we reason darkly when we reason of the future, and so everything may be for the best.

"Mr. Webster has sent me his speech on the slavery question in pamphlet with expressions of 'cordial friendship.' I have replied in a brief letter putting him right on the subject of Texas annexation. My view of that subject was not narrow, local, or bigoted. It embraced the whole country and all its interests. The monopoly of the cotton-plant was the great and important concern. That monopoly, now secured, places all other nations at our feet. An embargo of a single year would produce in Europe a greater amount of suffering than a fifty years' war. I doubt whether Great Britain could avoid convulsions. And yet, with these results before him, Mr. Calhoun unceasingly talked of slavery and its abolition in connection with the subject. That idea seemed to possess him and Upshur as a *single idea*. They are gone to their long homes, and have left but few equals behind in all that is calculated to exalt the character of man. But I do but justice to myself in declaring that my views extended to the great interests of the country, and were not confined to a single interest.

"With love to Pris and all, your father, J. TYLER."

MRS. TYLER TO MRS. GARDINER.

"BROWN'S HOTEL, WASHINGTON, February 13, 1861.

"I have a moment to myself just before tea, and I may have time to write you in haste something of the doings here. Since I last wrote I have not been allowed a moment's leisure. When within the hotel it has been an incessant stream of company, and then I have had visits to return, the Capitol to visit, etc. Last night I attended, with the President, the party of Senator Douglas, and I met in the throng my old friend, Mrs. Dixon, who, by the way, looked so well that the President thought her the handsomest person in the room. She had early called, but I was out, as was the case with her when I called. She was, of course, charmed to meet me again. We are all the time surrounded, and had greetings from old, and introductions to new acquaintances without number. People turned up, and recalled themselves to me that I certainly never expected to have met again. I saw and shook hands with two Messrs. Griswold. Mr. Bancroft (the historian) claimed relationship with me through the Chandlers, who married a Miss

Gardiner, of Gardiner's Island. I paraded the rooms with the handsomest man here, Governor Morehead, of Kentucky—one of the best likenesses of papa you ever saw in appearance, voice, laugh, and manner. I suppose I may conclude that I looked quite well. No attempts at entertainments have succeeded before, I was told, this winter, and to the hopes that are placed upon the efforts of this Peace Convention is to be attributed the success of this. People are catching at straws as a relief to their pressing anxieties, and look to the Peace Commissioners, as if they possessed some divine power to restore order and harmony. Here you can realize more than anywhere else the distracted state of the country. In the Peace Conference a committee are engaged (one from each State) in the preparation of a plan of adjustment, and when they report, which will be on Friday, the end I suppose can be foreseen. In the meantime all is suspense, from the President down. The New York and Massachusetts delegation will no doubt perform all the mischief they can; and it may be will defeat this patriotic effort at pacification. But whether it succeeds or not, Virginia will have sustained her reputation, and in the latter event will retire with dignity from the field to join without loss of time her more Southern sisters; the rest of the Slave Border States will follow her lead, and very likely she will be able to draw off, which would be glorious, a couple of Northern States. It is to be hoped that this state of suspense, which is bringing disaster to trade everywhere, will soon be removed in one way or another.

“The President has hundreds of letters of the inclosed description, which I inclose you because it is from Mr. Beeckman's son-in-law.

“Mr. Buchanan (the President) spent the evening in our parlor evening before last. I suppose it is the first visit he has paid since being the Nation's chief. He first wrote the President a letter full of gratitude for the relief he had afforded him in probably preventing, through his influence at Charleston, the attack on Fort Sumter. Miss Lane and Miss Ellis called upon me yesterday. If the President is detained here indefinitely, I shall run home. I want to be with my children. Probably I shall go on Friday, unless I hear from home in the

meantime to my satisfaction. Old Mrs. Hilliard, of Troy, called upon me this morning; she spoke of Miss Mary Gardiner, of Gardiner's Island, having been at her school. Mrs. Catron is quite sick; but I must conclude. I have so much to say of persons and events, and no time to say it in. . . . With love to all."

TO MRS. TYLER.

"RICHMOND, April 16, 1861.

"Well, dearest, your letter received this morning placed me much at ease relative to the dear children. I hope you will still keep an eye upon them, and not suffer them to expose themselves to the weather. Our noble boys are of high spirit, and if God spares them I think they will reflect honor on our names.

"The prospects now are that we shall have war, and a trying one. The battle at Charleston has aroused the whole North. I fear that division no longer exists in their ranks, and that they will break upon the South with an immense force. Virginia will deserve much credit for boldness if, in face of all this, in debt and without disciplined troops, she throws herself into the *mélee*, taking upon trust the action of the Border Slave States; but events press so rapidly on each other's heels that we have, I think, no alternative. Submission or resistance is only left us. My hope is that the Border States will follow speedily our lead. If so, all will be safe. The convention is sitting with closed doors. Another day may decide our course.

"To-morrow night is fixed for a great torchlight procession and illumination for the battle at Charleston. If to this is added an ordinance of secession, there will be an immense outburst. I wish the boys could be here. But do not understand me as saying an ordinance will be passed. On the contrary, it will be in doubt until the vote. General Scott has resigned. It is as I always thought it would be. He comes to offer his sword to Virginia. I propose to offer suitable resolutions. We learn that the Government has sent five hundred troops to the navy-yard at Portsmouth.

"These are dark times, dearest, and I think only of you and our little ones. But I trust in that same Providence that pro-

ted our fathers. These rascals who hold power leave us no alternative. I shall vote secession, and prefer to encounter any hazard to degrading Virginia. If the ordinance passes it is to be submitted to the people.

“Love and kisses to all. Always your devoted,

“J. TYLER.

“After 8.30 P. M.—Just adjourned without taking the question.”

Mrs. Tyler thus gives the details of her husband's last hours:—

“It was through a singular dream I had that I came to Richmond in time to be with Mr. Tyler during all his illness, which ended with his death, January 18, 1862. He had gone on before, in his usual health, and I was to follow with the baby, Pearl, for a stay of a few weeks, after visiting my friends at Brandon and Shirley on the river, which I intended should consume at least a week; but I awoke the morning I had proposed to leave with a troublesome dream. I thought I had risen to dress; but, on looking back to the bed, observed Mr. Tyler lying there, looking pale and ill. I remarked it to Nancy, the maid-servant, who had come in to assist me in dressing. It seemed he heard me speak, and said: ‘Are you awake, darling; come and hold my head.’ My feelings were so sad that he should have waited until I awoke before telling me he felt ill that I really awoke, much distressed, and as I did so Nancy entered the room, and warned me it was time to dress for the boat. I surprised her by saying that I intended going right on to Richmond, without stopping anywhere on the river, and narrated my dream. She knew I had looked forward with pleasure to making the visits to my friends, and begged I would not be influenced by my dream, saying, ‘You know, mistress, dreams always go by contraries;’ but none of the family could dissuade me from going direct to Richmond; and so, with old nurse, Fanny, and the baby, I arrived at the Exchange Hotel on Friday, January 10th, after dark, and entirely unexpected. On alighting from the carriage I was recognized by Colonel Edward C. Cabell, who assisted me.

My first inquiry was in regard to the President, and my anxiety was allayed on hearing he was quite well. He said I was taking my husband by surprise, as he had just left his room, and heard from him that I would not be in Richmond for some time. He proposed to go in search of him, as they had left his room together, and had parted at the reading-room. I knew the location of his room, and said we would await him there. In a few moments I heard his hurried steps on the bridge, which, you know, joins the Exchange to the Ballard House. The baby clapped her little hands on seeing him. As he took her from the nurse he said, gleefully, 'I really believe she knows me'—he had been away from her two or three weeks—and then he wanted to know what all this change in my plans, since my letter of the day before, meant. I told the dream, which quite amused him. The next day the parlor was filled with our visitors, and all were remarking on the health and cheerfulness of the President. Mr. Boulware said to him: 'How becoming is your new suit!' The President laughed heartily, and replied: 'I wear it in honor of my wife's arrival; but I had always thought until now that there was no use in my having a new suit of clothes, for no one ever noticed it.' That night (Saturday) I awoke in the night suffering from headache. The President placed his hand on my head, and said: 'Your forehead is so cold; shan't I send for the doctor? You see your dream is out; it is *your* head that I am holding, and not you mine.' I asked for morphine. He arose, weighed some, and gave it to me, and very soon I was entirely relieved. The next morning when I awoke, quite early, I observed him standing before the fire nearly dressed. Then he said: 'Your dream now is out, for I believe I have had a chill, and I have determined to go down to the breakfast table and take a cup of hot tea.' I begged he would have it sent for, and lie down again; but he preferred to go for it, and so I, not thinking his illness was serious, remained where I was, to sleep off the effects of the morphine. I was aroused by the entrance of the President returning, and alarmed to see him with collar open, and cravat in hand. He exclaimed, 'I would not have had it happen for a great deal; it will be all around the town!' and then went on to tell me he had risen to leave the table,

staggered, and fell. He was lifted and carried to the parlor, where, lying on the sofa, he recovered consciousness, and then insisted upon coming alone to his room, lest I should be alarmed. His friends began surging into the room before I could rise to attend him. They were very solicitous, and extended him on the sofa; but he assured them he was better, and would send for his doctor, and then he could not help relating my dream, saying: 'Her dream is a true one, and I leave my wife and her children to God and my country.' The gentlemen left the room, expressing wishes soon to hear from him, and to be of service. Dr. Peachy arrived, and pronounced his case a bilious attack, united with bronchitis, as he was soon troubled with a cough. He did not take to his bed entirely, and desired to receive and converse with the friends who called upon him; but as his symptoms did not improve, and he had much headache, his physician insisted he should go home and have perfect quiet for a few days, for his mind was constantly exercised over the situation of the country, and he could talk of little else, except to express such tender love and anxiety for his family. How I will treasure all his loving expressions! The doctor gave him a morphine mixture for his cough, which soothed it, but caused him to make wandering remarks when half asleep.

"Mr. Rives had an interview with him on Thursday (the 16th) in regard to his son residing in New York, whose property he feared might be in danger of confiscation. He took occasion to request that Mr. Rives would ask the permission of Congress to his absence for a few days, according to the wish of his physician. He was always so scrupulous in his obedience to rules. He said he would go to Sherwood on Saturday; but alas! on Friday night, just after he had retired to bed, expressing the hope that he was better, and would have a good sleep, and had slept for an hour, he suddenly awoke with a feeling of suffocation, which immediately aroused me. Robert Tyler, who had determined to spend the night, and be of any assistance if needed, and had arranged himself to sleep upon the sofa, hastened for Dr. Brown, whose room was upon the same floor. By my side of the bed was a cot for the baby. The President threw himself across to it in his restlessness,

which awoke the child, who whimpered a little. He raised himself up, saying, 'Poor little thing, how I disturb her!' and lay back on his pillow. I bathed his head and chest with spirits, while the nurse hushed the little one. He asked to have her brought to him that he might kiss her. Dr. Brown came in without delay, and prescribed mustard-plasters and brandy. The President said, 'Doctor, I think you are mistaken,' but took the stimulant. Dr. Peachy entered, to whom he said: 'Doctor, I am going.' Dr. Peachy answered: 'I hope not, sir.' The President added: 'Perhaps it is best' (his last words). I held again the stimulant to his lips; his teeth chattered on the glass; he looked forward with a radiant expression, as if he saw something to surprise and please him, and then, as if falling asleep, was gone! The bedstead on which he died was exactly like the one I saw him upon in my dream, and unlike any of our own.

'So passed the strong, heroic soul away.'"

INDEX.

A

ADAMS, JOHN QUINCY—his opinion of President Tyler, 111—advises Mr. Webster to keep his place in the Cabinet, 168—his view of Mr. Tyler's Administration, 173—his report against Mr. Tyler's course, 212—presents petitions, 220, 221—agitates the slavery issue, 294—his view of the marriage of President Tyler, 471, 473.

B

BANK OF THE UNITED STATES—its charter, 27—its destruction, 29.

Benton, Thomas H.—his description of the inauguration of Vice-President Tyler, 107—his view of Mr. Tyler's address, 121—argues against a Bank, 148—his view of Mr. Clay's designs against the President, 168—throws "Tyler too" at the Whigs, 170—opposes the bill for the relief of General Harrison's widow, 182—his opinion of Mr. Clay's farewell, 220—describes Fremont's expedition to the Pacific, 262—his view of Mr. Cushing's mission to China, 270—his statements and claims on the Texas scheme, 313, 314—his mistakes, 340, 376, 382—his statement as to the act of annexation, 371—

blamed Calhoun for the Mexican War, 382.

Berrien, J. M.—his statement, 157—resigns his place in the Cabinet, 157.

Bibb, George M.—becomes a member of the Cabinet, 268.

Botts, John M.—his views of, and opposition to, President Tyler, 150, 151—offers a resolution to censure Mr. Giddings, 222.

C

CABINET—General Harrison's, retained, 110—its new relations and difficulties as to the President's title, 112, 113—members of, resign, 157—cause of its dissolution, 161—its composition, 180—members of the new, 180, 181—changes in, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269—deaths in, 267, 268—how Mr. Calhoun got into, 303, 304, 305.

Calhoun, J. C.—an early friend of internal improvements, 27, 28—Mr. Wise's opinion of, 29—his subsequent course, 30, 31—resigns the Vice-Presidency, enters the Senate, supports the tariff, 67—becomes Secretary of State, 268, 302, 303, 306—concludes the treaty of annexation, 311—his desire to enter the new Cabinet, 325.

Carolina, South—her characteristic dogma, 65—her votes

- thrown away in 1836, 79—votes for Van Buren in 1840, 107—declares for secession or annexation of Texas, 315—not represented in the Democratic Convention of 1844, 317—her efforts to clear the way for Polk and Texas, 324, 325.
- Christian, Robert—his standing and character, 25, 438.
- Clay, Henry—his tariff measure, 67—wants Judge White to stand out of his way, 84—his disappointments, causes of his defeat in convention, 87, 88, 89, 90—leads the Whigs in Congress, 141, 148, 151, 152—assails the President, 157—his farewell to the Senate, 220.
- Congress—character of its members in 1819, 41—special session of 1841, 124—its Bank legislation, 148, 149, 151, 156—acts of at special session, 181, 182—in the winter of 1841, 185, 209, 210, 212, 218, 219, 220—in the winter of 1842, 232, 264, 265, 269—in the winter of 1843, 271, 294, 313, 314—in the winter of 1844, 342, 368, 369, 370, 371—finally passes an act for the admission of Texas, 370, 371, 372—passes an act as to the day of holding the Presidential elections, 376.
- Convention, Presidential—in 1836, 78, 79—in 1840, 84, 85—in 1844, 316, 317.
- Convention, Peace — meets in Washington City, 390.
- Creole, The—case of, 221, 222.
- Cushing, Caleb — holds to Mr. Tyler, 178—nominated for the Treasury, 265—sent to China, 269 — his unexpected success, 270.
- D**
- DEMOCRATS, THE — their course as to internal improvements, finance, etc., 28, 29, 31 — their responsibility in the War of the Rebellion, 30, 31, 32—cease to be called Republicans, become the new Democracy, 76, 77—their Presidential nominations in 1836, 78—their nominations in 1840, 85—their course with President Tyler, 173, 208, 209, 219, 324, 367—have a majority in the House, 271—get a campaign rallying cry, 294, 324—their nominations in 1844, 316.
- Douglas, Stephen A.—appears in Congress, 294.
- E**
- ELECTION, PRESIDENTIAL—in 1836, 78, 79—in 1840, 106, 107.
- England—her boundary disputes and Ashburton Treaty, 254, 255—denies charges of her designs on Texas and slavery in this country, 306, 307—her Oregon boundary negotiations, 383.
- Ewing, Thomas—recommends the establishment of a bank, 143—proposes a plan to Congress, 147—assails the Organ, 161.
- F**
- FLOYD, GENERAL JOHN—defeated for Governor of Virginia, 46.
- Forward, W.—becomes Secretary of the Treasury, 180—resigns, 265.
- Fremont, J. C.—makes his first tour to the Pacific Slope, 262—his second trip, 294.

G

GARDINER, DAVID—killed on the *Princeton*, 268—his funeral at the White House, 470.

Giddings, Joshua R.—censured in Congress, 221, 222—re-elected and returns to his seat, 222.

Gilmer, Thomas W.—becomes Secretary of the Navy, 267—his sudden death, 268—his letter on Texas, 305, 306, 307, 308. "Globe, The"—its position against the Administration, intrigue for its overthrow, 324, 325—its enemies, 340.

H

HARRISON, GENERAL WM. H.—nominated for the Presidency, 78, 85—vote for in 1836, 79—his political standing, 87, 89, 91—his election, 106, 107—the inheritances of his Administration, 182, 183.

Henshaw, David—becomes Secretary of the Navy, but withdraws for want of confirmation, 267.

Holloway, Mrs. L. C.—quoted, 444, 450, 451, 454.

House, White—gossip and affairs of, 143, 146, 161, 162—the dead members of the Cabinet in, 268—Mr. Tyler vacates, 385, 386.

J

JACKSON, ANDREW—his great feat, 29—cause of his dislike of John Tyler, 54, 59—sends commissioners to Turkey, 59—prepares his cloak for Mr. Van Buren, 77—his New Orleans fine refunded by act of Congress, 264—desired the withdrawal of Mr. Tyler, 324—his interest in

"The Globe" and Mr. Blair, 340.

Johnson, Colonel R. M.—nominated for the Vice-Presidency, 78, 85.

Johnson, Andrew—appears in Congress, 294.

Jones, John W.—defeated for Speaker of the House, 124—elected Speaker, 271.

L

LEIGH, B. W.—declines to obey the Legislature, 71—becomes a hero, 75.

Legaré, Hugh S.—becomes Attorney-General, 181—supervises the State Department, his death, 266.

Letters—Judge Tyler's, to his son, 13—President Tyler's, to Wm. Tyler, 16; to Samuel Blackburn, 47; to General Smyth and others, 50; to nominating committee, 85, 318; to Democrats of Henrico County, 93; to Tazewell, 256; to H. A. Wise, 317; to his friends, 325; to Thomas Ritchie, 336; to his son Robert, 338, 429, 440, 478; to "The Enquirer," 419, 423; to Dr. Curtis, 439, 440; to Mrs. Tyler, 439, 442—John Minor Botts's, 151—Mr. Webster's, 165—Mrs. Robert Tyler's to her relatives, 451, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460.

M

MASON, JOHN Y.—becomes Secretary of the Navy, 268—becomes Attorney-General, 269.

Messages—President Tyler's, to special session of Congress, 124, 140—annual, 1841, 185—second annual, 232—third annual, 271,

292, 293 — fourth annual, 342, 366.

O

ORGANS, Presidential — when established, their character, 145, 146—their work, 161, 162, 164.

P

POLK, JAMES K.—nominated for the Presidency, 316—his pledges as to Texas, his intrigue, 324, 325, 340, 371, 375—grounds on which he was elected, 382.

Poore, B. P.—describes Henry A. Wise, 301—describes life in the White House, 462.

Porter, J. M.—Becomes Secretary of War, and withdraws for want of confirmation, 267.

R

REBELLION, DOBB—sketch of, 222, 223, 228.

Rives, William C.—his race with Mr. Tyler for Congress, 80, 81, 82—defends Mr. Tyler, 151.

S

SHERWOOD FOREST—the home of President Tyler, 402, 403—the present home of his widow, 469.

Slavery—its standing in America at the beginning of this century, 27, 28, 31—what its downfall demonstrated, 30, 31—struggle against in Congress, 221, 294—the right of Congress to legislate on discussed, 369—source of all the national evils, 395.

Spencer, John C.—becomes Secretary of War, 181—transferred to the Treasury, 265—resigns, 268.

State Rights—in its extreme aspect, 64—its supporters in the Whig opposition, 75, 76—its supporters in the Presidential election of 1836, 78, 79—end of the dogma of, 432, 433.

Stevenson, Andrew—defeated by John Tyler for Congress, 24, 26, 36.

Stuart, A. H.—his statement about President Tyler's position on the Bank legislation, 152.

T

TEXAS—becomes of great importance to the Administration at Washington, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296—intrigue concerning, 306, 306—negotiations for her annexation, 309, 310, 311—South Carolina speaks for her, 315—last steps in Congress for her annexation, 369, 370, 371, 377—her boundary, her war with Mexico, her colonization from the United States, 377, 378, 379, 380.

Treaty, Ashburton—its purposes, 254—its character and claims, 255.

Tyler, Henry—his origin, appearance in Virginia, his family, 10.

Tyler, Henry—son of the former Henry, 10.

Tyler, John—a Crown officer in Virginia, 10.

Tyler, John—birth and parentage, father of the President, 10—his education, his profession, his political and public career, 11, 12—his character, his marriage and children, 12, 13, 14.

Tyler, Mary Marot (Amistead)—her origin, mother of the President, 12, 13.

Tylers, The—their character, origin, early English history, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18.

Tyler, President—birth, education, 20, 21, 22—his law preceptors, 22—begins his political career in the Legislature, 22—as an orator and speaker, 22, 23, 45, 46—his early politics and public course, 23, 24—elected to Congress, 24, 25, 26, 36, 41—his course, views, and services in Congress, 26, 27, 28, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 44, 52, 53, 55, 56, 59, 60, 74—his marriage, 25, 438, 471—resigns his seat in Congress, 44—elected to the Legislature, 45, 80—his course, views, and services in the Legislature and as Governor of Virginia, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51—elected Governor, 46, 49—his occupations at home, 47, 73, 402, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 466, 467—elected to the United States Senate, defeats John Randolph of Roanoke, 49, 50, 67—he is accused of treachery in this election, 49, 50—resigns his governorship, delivers an oration on Thomas Jefferson, 51—takes his seat in the Senate, 52—his political principles and course, 33, 35, 36, 37, 42, 44, 48, 50, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 59, 60, 61, 74, 75, 77, 80, 81, 87, 89, 91, 92, 93, 104, 105, 115, 150, 168, 431, 433, 434—his views on internal improvements, 46, 48, 53, 55, 56—his opposition to General Jackson, 40, 52, 54, 59, 60, 67, 68, 70, 74, 264—his views and course on the Force Bill, 60, 61, 64, 65, 66—his views on State Rights, State Sovereignty, 42,

57, 58, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 431, 432, 433—his views on slavery, 42, 405—his views and course as to the Bank, 38, 60, 68, 74, 131, 132, 133, 143, 148, 149, 151, 152, 154, 156, 158, 165, 170—his views and course as to tariffs, 44, 53, 59, 67, 212—his mind and character, 44, 45, 66, 71, 81, 90, 104, 105, 113, 165, 297, 298, 299, 300, 367, 388, 389, 400, 431, 434, 435, 436, 451, 471, 472, 473, 476, 478—his kind of patriotism, 66, 67, 390, 398, 400, 432, 433, 477—elected president of the Senate *pro tem.*, 70—resigns his seat, cause of his action, 71—his disposition towards Mr. Clay, 76, 89, 90, 91, 104, 175, 176, 177—nominated for the Vice-Presidency in 1836, 78—his vote, 79—defeated by Rives for Congress, a contest in which the Whigs at Washington shared, 81, 82, 83—nominated by the Whigs for Vice-President, his letter of acceptance, 84, 85—in the campaign, story of his shedding tears, 87, 89, 90, 92, 93, 104, 105—he only desired to be Vice-President, 105—his election, 106, 107—his inauguration and address to the Senate, 107, 108—becomes President, 110, 111—he retains the Cabinet of General Harrison, 110, 111, 112—he wisely settles the matter of his title and office, 113—his course with the Whigs, 92, 93, 105, 113, 114, 123, 140, 141, 143, 150, 151, 152, 157, 161, 164, 165, 168, 169, 170, 173, 175, 184, 185, 212, 367, 434—addresses the people, 115, 120, 121—recommends a day of fasting and prayer, 122—his

message to Congress, special session, 124, 140 — his White House affairs, 143, 144, 146, 147, 161, 435, 445, 447, 448, 461, 462, 465, 466, 471, 474—his financial plan, 147, 148, 154, 166, 209, 210, 256, 260—his aspirations for the Presidency, 170, 171, 300, 301—his Cabinet, 157, 161—has a kind of "Kitchen Cabinet," 173—his new Cabinet, 180, 181—his Administration, 173, 182, 183, 185, 210, 211, 212, 218, 219, 220, 222, 223, 224, 228, 229, 231, 254, 255, 262, 266, 293, 296, 297, 298, 302, 305, 309, 310, 311, 312, 314, 315, 324, 342, 367, 368, 377, 383, 417, 420, 426, 431, 432, 433, 435—his annual messages, 185, 208, 232, 254, 271, 342, 366—his protest against the course of Congress, 213—his "Corporal's Guard," 178, 219—without a party, 219—his action touching the "Dorr Rebellion," 223, 224—his hand in the Seminole War, 230, 231—his Pacific Slope explorations, 262, 264, 294—his Texas project, 293, 296, 305, 308, 309, 312, 313, 323, 339, 340, 344, 367, 371, 376, 377—his taking Mr. Calhoun into the Cabinet, 302, 303, 304, 305—nominated for the Presidency, 317—his letter of acceptance, 318—his supporters, 323—resigns the nomination, 325, 326, 340—his testimony as to "The Globe," Texas, and his Administration, 325, 326, 336, 338, 340, 416, 418, 420, 423, 429—his efforts to fix the Oregon boundary, 383, 384—joins in the inauguration ceremonies, leaves the White House, 385, 386—his literary

standing, 389—his efforts for peace, 390, 394, 395, 398—presides at the Peace Convention, 390—his speech before the convention, 390, 393—in the State Convention, 395—takes the side of secession, in the "Confederate Congress," 398, 399, 400—his death, 398, 413, 414, 484, 486—sketch of from 1845 to 1862, 402 to 415—reveals his intentions to Mr. Wise, 470—his marriage, 471, 472, 473—his second family, 475, 476, 478—his property, his last days, 402, 476, 478, 483.

Tyler, Mrs. Letitia (Christian)—her family and marriage, 25, 438, 439—her birth, culture, and charming character, 441, 443, 444, 445, 448, 452, 461, 462—her children, 447—her death, 448.

Tyler, John, Jr.—Secretary of the President, 271—his view of his parents, 450, 454.

Tyler, Mrs. Robert (Priscilla Cooper)—her own picture of herself and the White House, 446, 451, 452, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 461—her testimony as to Mrs. Tyler and her family, 452, 461.

Tyler, L. G.—quoted, 256, 260, 318, 338, 385, 386, 416, 439.

Tyler, Mrs. Julia G.—describes the leaving of the White House, 386—her birth, family, education, sketch of, 463 to 470—her marriage, 466, 471, 472, 473—her beauty, mind, and character, her family and home, her conduct of affairs as mistress of the White House, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478—her account of her husband's last hours, 483.

U

UNDERWOOD, J. R.—opposes Mr. Tyler's taking the title of President, 222—announces his intention to introduce a resolution to censure the President, 222.

Upshur, Abel P.—becomes Secretary of the Navy, 180—enters the State Department, 267—his death 268.

V

VAN BUREN, MARTIN—hardly accepted in the South, 78, 80—bears the burdens of General Jackson, called a magician, 80—nominated for the Presidency, 85—his defeat, 106, 107—scheme to defeat him in 1844, 293, 294.

Von Holst, Dr. H.—quoted, character of his work, 171, 172, 298, 299, 300.

W

WAR, SEMINOLE—still wearing along, 209—closed by President Tyler, 230, 231.

Webster, Daniel—figures in the defeat of Mr. Clay, 88—remains in the Cabinet, 157, 161—makes a statement, 160, 165, 265—resigns, 265—his relations with President Tyler, 266—opposed to the annexation of Texas, 379.

Whigs—their origin, 53—their composition in 1836, 76, 77—their candidates in 1836, 78—their hand in the Virginia Legislature, 81, 82, 83—their nominations in 1839, 84, 85, 87, 88, 89, 90—their famous campaign,

91, 92, 105, 106—their great misfortune, 109, 110, 111, 114—their course with Mr. Tyler and as to a bank, 142, 143, 148, 149, 168, 170, 173, 174, 219, 220, 434, 435—ask the members of the Cabinet to resign, 161—those named who remained true to Mr. Tyler, 178.

White, Hugh L.—nominated for the Presidency, 78—his political standing and aspirations, 79, 84—asked to stand out of Mr. Clay's way, 84.

White, John—elected Speaker of the House in 1841, 124—defeated for Speaker, 271.

Wickliffe, Charles A.—becomes Postmaster-General, 180.

Wilkins, William—becomes Secretary of War, 268.

Wise, Henry A.—his view of John Tyler's marriage to Miss Christian, 25—his opinion of Mr. Calhoun, 29, 30, 31—his criticism of Mr. Tyler's course on nullification, 65—his evidence on the Rives-Tyler contest for Congress, 82, 83—describes Mr. Tyler's financial plan, 147—reprimands Mr. Tyler, 176—leads the "Corporal's Guard," 219—his character 219—his nomination rejected, 264—described, 301—sent out of the country, 301—brings Calhoun into the Cabinet, 302, 303, 304, 305—his account of President Tyler's matrimonial designs, 470, 471.

23
25

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